Letter from Roberto Rossellini • Eliot Marshall on Blue Cross

Reviews by Harrison Salisbury, Joyce Carol Oates, Philippe Ariès

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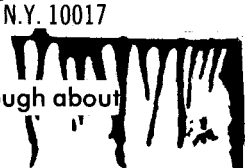

If you care enough about yourself . . .

TRB

from Washington ®
July 2, 1977

The Late, Great Earth

. . . The lifeless planet had been orbiting the sun for a thousand years before the space ship explorers of Unicorn II (one galaxy over from Star Wars) began their reconstruction of its bizarre story.

Circumstances that caused Earth's ecological calamity preserved its contours almost intact. Reconstructing its history and examining its homes, cities and shrines has absorbed our savants. But modern students now sadly conclude that they may never resolve what they call the Earth Enigma. All we know is that at one time an eager, aspiring, complex civilization existed; then it stopped. Why?

It is one thing for scholars to decipher a language and another to understand the creatures that speak it. Unicorn II students believe that existence on Earth was crude but often beautiful. (Time sequences still puzzle; after prolonged debate most scholars at Unicorn U now believe that Emperor Tutankhamun preceded the American President Carter by several thousand sun orbits.)

But why did it happen? Why did the inscrutable Earth devote so much thought to defending its respective tribes, and to killing others? Was it a death wish? A species that spends so much of its ill-distributed substance on weaponry can barely be called sapient. Individually the inhabitants were often mild and generous. Some tried to break the cycle: weapons creating fear, and fear creating more weapons. Some appreciated their danger. They were buying greater and greater insecurity at higher and higher cost.

The richest of the innumerable countries was America and, using its value term, our scholars believe that Earth spending for weapons and armies reached 350 billion dollars in the year 1976. (Year One of their calendar, from which they counted time, dated from the expression of the poignant hope of an ultimate, but always receding, condition of world peace.)

Toward the end Earth had four billion inhabitants of whom a quarter suffered malnutrition. The military budget of all its nations and tribes was equivalent to the annual income of 1.8 billion in the three dozen poorest nations. The larger countries carried their fears even under the sea and nuclearized their ingenious submarines which have become a space fantasy for Unicorn movie-goers. The cost of one model submarine, the Trident, equaled the money spent for a year's schooling of 16 million children in the poorer nations.

As for the richer countries, the average denizen of one of these could expect to sacrifice three or four years' income over his lifetime for the arms race. With the coming of fissionable Plutonium weapons escalation entered a new dimension. They still pursued superiority, but what did "superiority" mean in a nuclear age?

Many inhabitants realized the dilemma; in a dazzling discovery our archaeologists found in an entombed library a detailed report called "World Military and Social Expenditures." The Earth denizens of 1977 could not have imagined how fantastic this would seem to later dwellers in other galaxies. The survey was sponsored by a group of peace-seeking organizations with a foreword by a leader of the day, one Robert S. McNamara, who made a memorable (and unheeded) comment that "a society can reach a point at which additional military expenditure no longer provides additional security."

Reports were compiled annually by a contemporary terrestrial scribe called Ruth Leger Sivard and must have been as invaluable then as they are to us today.

The Earth's annual military budget in 1976, the study reports, was enough to buy 35,000 combat aircraft, 124,000 tanks (mobile monsters made of steel), the equivalent of 50 billion tons of TNT (translated from nuclear terms), while keeping 22 million men and women under arms. The Earth at that time had 1.3 billion children, but it spent more for weapons than education. Two superpowers constantly sought more efficient weapons for themselves and sold discarded weapons at cut rates to less developed countries, spreading the race around the world.

(continued on page 42)

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(¼ lb. raw beef, cooked, 1 tbsp. catsup) on bun	(3½ ounces bologna, 1 tbsp. mustard) on white bread	(3½ ounces tuna, 1 tbsp. mayonnaise) on white bread	(1 ounce peanut butter) on white bread

The bologna sandwich earned our lowest vote of confidence.

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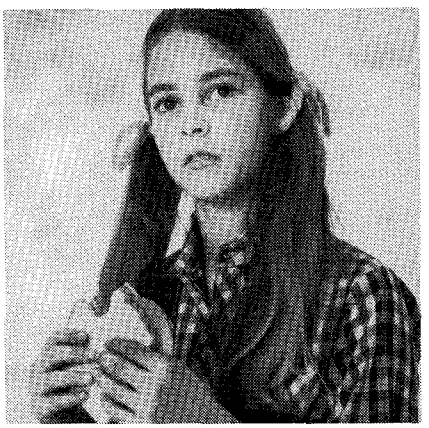

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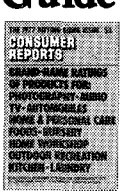

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

July 2, 1977

The Unborn and the Born Again

Until June 17, the battle against government restrictions on a woman's freedom to have an abortion seemed won. Indeed, it seemed a thing of the past. Then suddenly and unexpectedly, everything came unstuck. First the House of Representatives voted to ban the use of federal money to pay for abortions. This was nothing to get alarmed about, because a lower federal court had ruled that a similar ban enacted last year was unconstitutional. But three days later, the Supreme Court ruled that neither the federal Medicaid legislation nor the US Constitution prevents states from barring the use of Medicaid money for abortions. Nothing in the Court's decision suggested it would not apply to a federal ban as well. Then the day after the Supreme Court decision, the Senate Appropriations Committee voted to ban the use of federal money for abortions except in unusual circumstances, for example when the mother's life is threatened. President Carter and Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare Joseph Califano support this ban. Medicaid pays for almost one third of all legal abortions performed in this country. It appears certain that a ban on Medicaid abortions will be enacted and upheld. Other restrictions on abortion—in federal or state-financed hospitals, under other arrangements with government ties—seem possible.

The pro-abortion forces have brought this disaster upon themselves. Or rather, they themselves have brought it upon the hundreds of thousands of poor women who will be forced to bear and raise children they don't want; and upon the taxpayers who will be forced to support many of these unwanted children. By relying on the courts to do their job for them, they loftily have abandoned the processes of democracy to the ardent right-to-lifers. In doing so, they have shown an unseemly willingness to misuse that valuable tool provided to the reflective elite as a way of curbing the reflexive mass, the United States Constitution. The irony is that a majority of Americans—67 percent by one recent poll, 81 percent by another—favors abortion on demand. But the political process does not respond. The right-to-lifers—spurred by each legal defeat and undaunted by the arrogant dismissals of their genuine anguish, and impugning of their motives—have it all locked up.

In the early 1970s, anti-abortion laws were on the way out. States were gradually relaxing their restrictions to the point where abortions were available virtually on demand in many places. This cautious progress of reform is a common pattern; it is happening now with anti-marijuana laws. Then, in 1973, came *Roe v. Wade*, in which the Supreme Court found in the Constitution a detailed abortion law that divides pregnancy into "trimesters" and permits abortions virtually without restrictions in the first two. State laws placing greater restrictions on abortions, the Court held, invaded a woman's privacy in violation of the Due Process Clause of the 14th Amendment. Critics of *Roe v. Wade* pointed out its similarity to notorious Supreme Court decisions during the first three decades of this century, in which the Due Process Clause was invoked to invalidate state attempts to regulate businesses—such as health and safety and minimum wage laws—as intrusions on "freedom of contract." This magazine wrote of *Roe v. Wade*, "Again, it seems, it may take some time before the realization comes that this will not do."

Roe v. Wade killed off the movement for abortion reform, by making it seem superfluous. But this was the moment life began—conception, "quickening," viability, birth: choose your own metaphor—for the right-to-life movement. In four years it has become one of the most powerful political lobbies in the country. This power is based not on numbers but on passion. It is inspiring, in a way. Since the end of the antiwar movement, these misguided people represent the only major pressure group on the political scene whose cause is not essentially self interest. They speak for what is in their minds a truly unrepresented minority: fetuses.

The right-to-lifers' argument is simple: a fetus is a

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human life, and the government should not sanction the taking of human life except in the direst circumstances, such as when another life is threatened. None of the most common pro-abortion arguments deal with this issue head-on. Would "a woman's right to control her own body" permit her to kill another adult person who has committed no offense against her? Would we sanction the murder of children who are unwanted and unloved, just as we sanction the destruction of fetuses because they might turn out that way? Would it evoke much sympathy for a "legalize terror bombing" movement, to be told that terrorists often injure themselves with amateurish home-made bombs?

The most unfair argument against the anti-abortion movement is the smear of guilt by association with the Catholic Church. A 1975 report of the US Commission on Civil Rights said that government limits on abortion "would give governmental sanction to one set of moral and religious views and inhibit the free exercise of any other moral and religious views on the issue of when life begins." But the government has to inhibit the free exercise of different moral views. It would be no defense at a trial for child murder to argue a belief that, "Life begins at 40." For the government to take a truly agnostic position on the issue of when human life begins, it would have to protect fetuses from the moment of conception in case Roman Catholics are right: you don't walk away from a flooded mineshaft because there's only a 50-50 chance someone's trapped at the bottom.

Those who believe a woman should be free to have an abortion must face the consequences of their beliefs. Metaphysical arguments about the beginning of life are fruitless. But there clearly is no logical or moral distinction between a fetus and a young baby; free availability of abortion cannot be reasonably distinguished from euthanasia. Nevertheless we are for it. It is too facile to say that human life always is sacred; obviously it is not, and the social cost of preserving against the mother's will the lives of fetuses who are not yet self-conscious is simply too great.

The Supreme Court declared last week it no longer will save us the trouble of defending our uncomfortable position. To appreciate the arguments the Court finally refused to swallow in *Maher v. Roe* requires a little history of 14th Amendment doctrine. The part of the Constitution on which practically all the great civil rights decisions of the past quarter century were based is the phrase in the 14th Amendment guaranteeing every person "equal protection of the laws." The problem in recent years has been deciding what this means. Every law or government action treats people unequally—granting some a benefit or causing others a deprivation of some sort. The Court has had to decide what kinds of distinctions are inherently "suspect" and therefore worthy of "special scrutiny." The easiest came first: the distinction between blacks and whites. Others followed: aliens and citizens, illegitimate and legitimate children. Government policies making male-female distinctions usually are treated as violations of the Equal Protection Clause. The Warren Court occasionally suggested that distinctions based on wealth were suspect, but the Burger Court has shied away from that thicket.

Since the Constitution does not require states to provide *any* free health care for the poor, it could hardly be argued that the Constitution requires free abortions. Instead, it was argued that once the state decided to offer Medicaid services to pregnant women, it could not discriminate between assistance for normal births and abortions. In other words, the proposed "suspect classification" was between two different categories of poor pregnant women: those who want an abortion and those who want to have the child. The Court rightly rejected this artificial classification. To rule otherwise would be telling the government it couldn't offer an aspirin to someone with a headache unless it also was willing, upon request, to chop off his head.

The Court also rejected a second argument: that the state was unfairly interfering with a pregnant woman's constitutional right to reject childbirth and choose an abortion, by offering to pay for one and not the other. The Court said a state can *influence* a choice it is not free to *deny*, and pointed out that offering free childbirth does not in any way *burden* the right to an abortion. It offered an interesting analogy. It is unconstitutional for a state to deny parents the right to send their children to private school. This doesn't mean the state can't influence that decision by offering public schooling for free.

Well, that's constitutional law for you: arid logic far removed from genuine human motivations and needs. That is why we have politics. As the Court said last week, "The Constitution does not provide judicial remedies for every social and economic ill. . . . [W]hen an issue involves policy choices as sensitive as those implicated by public funding of nontherapeutic abortions, the appropriate forum for their resolution in a democracy is the legislature."

Which brings us to our craven legislature, and our President and our Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare. They are free—indeed they are obligated—to make the decision the Supreme Court cannot. It is grotesquely unfair to deny poor women the choice of having an abortion, when this choice is available to wealthier ones. Of course the poor do without a lot of privileges the rich enjoy, because the government's redistributive impulses are limited. This we can understand, even if we do not always agree. But no money is saved by cutting off Medicaid funds for abortions. Quite the opposite: the average first-year cost to the government resulting from childbirth on Medicaid is $2200, compared to less than $200 for an abortion. And of course in most cases the first year is not the end of it.

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Correspondence

Korean defense

To the editors:

The Koreanization plan of President Carter quite clearly did not come under significant review or question before its rather clumsy promulgation ("Carter's Koreanization Plan," *TNR*, June 11). The President only sought information on how to implement his plan and not substantive criticism of its merits and this has led to numerous thoughtless oversights.

Unfortunately, *The New Republic* gives too much credence to the President's claim of "a very careful, very orderly withdrawal." He presumably does not realize the enormous gap, militarily and psychologically, that needs to be filled. Only American forces equipped with about 640 tactical nuclear weapons have maintained the rough balance. To be sure, South Korea is not the "semi-defenseless country it was in 1950," but North Korea has hardly remained stagnant herself. In fact, the military disparity between the two sides has been growing in recent years to the advantage of Pyongyang. Large numbers of people or a booming GNP do not provide much of a defensive barrier.

The surest way to guarantee a land war in Asia is to proclaim unequivocally the American refusal to participate in such an engagement. The Mutual Defense Treaty does not require the stationing of American troops on Korean soil, but the vanishing outposts of American strength in East Asia make assurance of future logistical support rather implausible. Rhetoric about honoring commitments comes cheaply and, in the aftermath of Vietnam, with large doses of skepticism. As an old Korean proverb goes: "Don't trust the Russians and don't believe the Americans."

Jeffrey B. Gayner
Washington, DC

To the editors:

We may not know "precisely" what motivated Kim Il Sung's 1950 invasion of South Korea, but we know quite a good deal from Khrushchev's memoirs.

According to Khrushchev, Kim Il Sung maintained to Stalin that the conquest of South Korea would be quick and easy, aided by internal uprisings, and would be completed before the United States could effectively intervene. Khrushchev does not mention Acheson's National Press Club speech, and it would appear that it played no role in Communist decisions.

On this basis, Kim Il Sung received a green light from Stalin and subsequently from Mao. There are indications that last year Kim Il Sung again sought approval for an attack on South Korea from the Chinese, but this time—perhaps in part because of the improved relations between China and the United States—was turned down.

David C. Williams
Sumner, Maryland

Crime fits the punishment

To the editors:

TRB nicely upended the popular delusion that the public is any the wiser for Watergate and that the political system had anything to do with getting us out of the hole (June 4).

Two legalisms of doubtful validity conspired to enable a free and unsworn Nixon to protest his innocence while jousting with an amateur cross-examiner. Both remain unchallenged and unrighted, attesting to the public's panglossian attitude toward lessons the scandal might have taught it and also to the disquieting fact that the political system does not stand eternally watchful.

The first is the President's unlimited power to pardon which, without benefit of formal judicial construction, was conveniently twisted to mean that a pardon that precedes an adjudication of guilt need not exact an admission of guilt and which, in Nixon's case, allowed him to write his own blameless acceptance and President Ford some bad law.

The second relates to prejudicial pretrial publicity and the possibility of it preventing a fair trial. Inasmuch as such publicity is an inevitable incident of holding high office, it should not be permitted to be invoked in behalf of a President of the United States (and other high officials) since it provides automatic immunity against timely prosecution. Although not officially pleaded in Nixon's behalf, President Ford used it as one of a handful of platonic excuses to pardon him when he asked the special prosecutor how long before he could get a fair trial and was told "from nine months to a year—and probably even longer." The true and obvious answer he was after was "Never"—so he made do with the one he got.

Jacob S. Hurwitz
Woodmere, New York

Humble Quislings

To the editors:

In the summer of 1945, staff members of the United States Strategic Bombing Survey, of which I was a director, were poking through the ruins of the Gestapo headquarters in Berlin. Among various files pertaining to Operation Sea Lion, the partially planned but then aborted invasion of Britain, they found two books both bound in black cardboard, one listing the people to be arrested on arrival, another listing potentially useful collaborators. The books were brought down to our headquarters at Bad Nauheim. The second list, that of potential collaborators, was, quite possibly, the one mentioned by David Pryce-Jones ("Not their Finest Hour," *TNR*, May 14) and about which he expressed much curiosity, while also suggesting that it might never be released.

Before sending the books on to British army authorities we examined them with, as may be imagined, vast interest. Both lists were a disappointment. The first, as might have been expected, included everyone from Churchill on down and indeed was a Who's Who of British leaders and anti-Nazi activists. The second list, Mosley and one or two others apart, listed people of whom we had never heard. Few, as I recall, had titles; most seemed to be obscure citizens. Perhaps they were rank and file members of the British Union of Fascists but we had no way of telling.

I did not then know many names of people among the British ruling classes. But others with a wider knowledge and acquaintance were equally impressed (and needless to say disappointed) by the general anonymity of those listed.

I mention this matter not to quarrel with Mr. Pryce-Jones or to exculpate the British Establishment which, from all evidence, had its full share of the subsceptible and confidently brainless. I enjoyed his piece and add this only as a footnote of some possible historical interest.

John Kenneth Galbraith
Harvard University

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So why is this injustice tolerated? We know that Congress has no backbone in the face of pressure from special interest groups, but where is the moral leadership from the executive branch? We do not doubt the sincerity of Carter's religious views, or Califano's, in opposition to abortion. But more than a million legal abortions are performed every year now in this country, and only 300,000—probably the ones that relieve the most misery, whatever the countervailing evil—can be stopped by this desperate backdoor ploy. We submit it is a crude moral calculus indeed that arbitrarily would wreak so much havoc in so many lives, in exchange for such a partial victory for the unborn.

A Real Debate in '78?

Last year's Madison Square Garden convention mandated that the Democratic party hold its second mid-term convention sometime in 1978, leaving the details to be worked out later. Last week, the Democratic National Committee began preparations and turned up some differences of opinion.

Those bearing tidings from the White House argued to keep the conference small (about half the size of a regular convention), manageable (a sizable portion of the delegates attending ex officio), early (April or May of next year), and harmless (with the focus off issues and on party building and preparations for the 1978 elections). Others preferred a larger conference, held after the mid-term elections, with a heavy dose of delegates elected directly from the grassroots and featuring a full blown issues debate.

President Carter's advisers are apparently apprehensive that an issues convention after the 1978 elections might provide a launching pad for a challenger from within the party, perhaps Jerry Brown. Also, they reason, why provide a convenient forum for airing criticism of the President's programs a year before he must officially begin defending them in a reelection campaign?

But attempting to minimize the event by assuring in advance that it starts and stays on a harmless course defeats the whole idea. The concept of a mid-term convention—used once before the turn of the century by the GOP and then abandoned—was resurrected after the rambunctious 1968 Chicago convention by Democrats who felt that Lyndon Johnson's presidency might have been saved had Johnson realized the depth of antiwar sentiment in his own party. With the public relations resources at its disposal, the White House could manage such a conference in a way that minimizes the appearance of dissension. But that would be a mistake. The symptoms inevitably will appear later. If the President is out of step with the party rank and file, it would be best to have a full airing of differences before the re-election campaign gets under way. Keeping in mind the party's divisions in 1968 and 1972, it might also prove an inoculation of sorts for all sides. A no-holds-barred policy debate is the best way the President has of gauging the state of morale among the troops he has to call upon to run his reelection effort.

Administration double talk.

Europe's Future

What is this government's policy toward Eurocommunism? When President Carter returned from the London summit, he told a congressional leadership group he was deeply troubled by the prospect of European Communist parties entering their governments, was resolved to do what he could to prevent this from happening, and planned to go to France in the fall to show his support for President Giscard. A few days later, however, in his Notre Dame speech, Carter announced that America had lost its inordinate fear of communism. As Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan observed on June 8, the President seemed to be calling upon Americans to shift their attention away from the basic political struggle of our time: that between liberal democracy and totalitarianism. The Notre Dame speech was especially surprising coming from the man who had given signs of understanding the need for a strong moral impulse in American foreign affairs.

The same day Moynihan was criticizing the Notre Dame speech, former Secretary of State Kissinger delivered his first major address since leaving office. The theme was Eurocommunism, and Kissinger spelled out the basis for his opposition in a detail that had been lacking during his own years in office. Warning against the disastrous consequences for NATO and for American security if Eurocommunists enter European governments, Kissinger stressed that "even if some West European Communist parties should prove more difficult [for the Kremlin] than the better disciplined satellites of East Europe . . . they would pose far more serious problems for the West." Kissinger argued gravely, "We must avoid giving the impression that we consider Communist success a foregone conclusion by ostentatious association or consultation with Communist leaders or by ambiguous declarations. Communist success is not a foregone conclusion. United States hesitation or ambiguity can, however, contribute to it."

The following morning, State Department spokes-

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man Hodding Carter told reporters that while there might be some small difference in "tone" between Kissinger's view and that of the Carter administration, there were no substantive disagreements. This surprised some of the correspondents, and Hodding Carter threatened to cite chapter and verse: "I will match you text for text."

Apparently no one told Secretary of State Vance, who told an interviewer from Rome's conservative daily *Il Tempo* he thought that Communist participation in European governments might create greater problems for the Soviet Union than for the United States. This has predictably caused a minor public furor in Europe, and the private reactions—especially from the Elysée—are even stronger. The Italian left cheerfully called attention to the dynamite in Vance's words: if the United States really believes that Communists in power in Western Europe might produce a net gain vis-a-vis the Soviets, then there is little reason for American hostility to such participation. Vance's words, whatever their intent, are being read as a signal to Europeans that American hostility to Eurocommunism is substantially less than in the past. Some even read Vance's remarks as an American acceptance of Eurocommunism, something for which the Communists themselves have been eagerly seeking in recent years. This is far more than a difference in "tone"; it is either a major departure or some sort of misunderstanding.

Jimmy Carter has said repeatedly that the future of Eurocommunism must be decided by Europeans, and that America will not interfere in the decision-making process. At the same time, the President (along with the Secretary of State) has said that this country is not indifferent to the outcome, that America prefers democratic governments to Communist ones. If that is so, then he would do well to ponder the effects of the contradictory statements we have heard of late. They "interfere" directly, because Europeans are extremely sensitive to American attitudes, whether they are couched in Spenglerian or Georgian accents. But more to the point, if we do indeed prefer that the Eurocommunists not become major governmental forces, then we ought not to send the opposite message.

Giscard d'Estaing, who will be fighting for his political life next spring, hardly needs this kind of help from his friends in Washington. The same can be said about Italian Premier Giulio Andreotti, who heads a feeble government which survives from one day to the next only because of a Communist policy of parliamentary abstention. These men are fighting the crucial political battle of the postwar period. They are entitled to know, clearly and distinctly, what the administration believes. So are the American people.

Michael Ledeen

Michael Ledeen is executive editor of the *Washington Review of Strategic and International Studies.*

Anatomy of Health Care Costs: V

Blue Cross

If American hospitals are obese, as HEW Secretary Joe Califano says, it is because they have been indulged and overfed by their keepers. Individual patients aren't their keepers anymore and haven't been for almost 40 years. Ninety percent of Americans are protected by some kind of health insurance, and the companies that provide this service are supposed to keep the hospitals well nourished, but also trim and fit. The largest and oldest of these keepers is Blue Cross. It designed and still dominates the system by which the hospitals get their income.

Blue Cross is so complex, diverse and disjointed that it really seems wrong to call it by one name. Some say it is just a trade association of 69 local funds whose common purpose is to pay hospital bills as generously and completely as possible. Though it makes no profit, Blue Cross does grow like other bureaucracies, and like many, it has a split personality. When it speaks to a person who may want to buy its health insurance, it presents itself as a friend who will take care of nearly all hospital bills. It can afford to do this by spreading its costs over time and sharing them with a larger number of subscribers. But when it speaks to hospitals, it presents itself as a bill payer and as something more important—a kind of bank. It guarantees all hospitals that sign a contract with it that they will get full compensation for the cost of treating Blue Cross patients. Long ago when Blue Cross was the only health care financier, this amounted to a guarantee against bankruptcy, a minimum income. Traditionally that has been an important role for Blue Cross, and it is the foundation on which the hospitals' economy rests.

Blue Cross was a creation of the hospitals themselves. Until just five years ago it was an adjunct of the American Hospital Association. When they became separate legal entities the Hospital Association officially gave up the Blue Cross emblem, which it owned, and turned it over the the Blue Cross corporation. An emblem may not seem important, but in this case it is. It serves as an instrument of discipline as well as a public relations symbol, for the only penalty the national Blue Cross corporation can impose on one of the 69 local plans, if the local should become obstreperous, is to take

SUMMER SCHEDULE:

We will omit issues on July 16 (next week) and on August 13 and 27

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away its emblem. This never has happened. Nevertheless, the threat exists, and the use of the symbol is one of the few things that gives the organization cohesiveness.

When the Hospital Association and Blue Cross parted ways, the Blue Cross national headquarters adopted a rule that it would keep hospital officials in the minority on its board of governors. Since then it has ordered the local plans to do the same, and today 63 percent of the local board governors are not connected with hospitals. It seems fair to say that until quite recently Blue Cross was controlled by the people it was supposed to keep.

Blue Cross is understandably touchy about its past. The public relations chief in Washingotn, DC, Joseph Nagelschmidt, chafes about people who imagine that Blue Cross is "in bed with the hospitals," as he put it. The keeper is trying to put distance between itself and the kept, but the task is difficult and some local units are not rushing to make the change. Altering the legal status of an organization doesn't change its habits; many of the people who run Blue Cross—particularly at the local level—have been around for a long time.

One of Blue Cross's weaknesses in trying to adjust to the new spirit of austerity is its structure. It is a loose federation—in the Jeffersonian tradition, Nagelschmidt said. "Nothing is more American than Blue Cross," he went on, adding "except maybe Red Cross." Its executive consists of a board of 26 governors elected from regions around the country and a president elected by the governors. In theory the board makes policy for the nation, but in truth each local plan has considerable freedom to conduct business as it wishes once it has met the criteria for membership. The central office in Chicago may adopt progressive policies and ask local plans to identify and attack waste in hospitals. But none of this matters if the locals don't feel like obliging.

In a rare federal inquiry into the Blue Cross system in 1971 the Senate Antitrust Subcommittee came upon an egregious case of local defiance in Richmond, Virginia, illustrating how far from the national standard an individual plan can wander if it has venal inclinations. The Social Security Administration guessed that the Richmond plan was in trouble because it had failed to send in a budget report for Medicare—which Blue Cross administers—in the spring of 1970, and Medicare officials apparently passed the word to Blue Cross headquarters.

As an official from headquarters went through the books, it became clear that Richmond had seriously botched its finances. It not only had the highest administrative costs for processing bills of any Blue Cross plan in the country, but it had run up a 26 percent deficit on the Medicare account. There were conflicts of interest involving the trustees. One person on the board, a sales executive for a local furniture company, had sold the plan more than a million dollars worth of furniture without submitting a competitive bid. The plan had given a $200,000 grant for "research and development" to a data processing company that had a director who worked for Blue Cross. The plan paid for the staff's free use of 119 hired cars and subsidized memberships in Richmond country clubs. A management expert came in from Chicago and cleaned up the mess, but not without meeting resistance.

By the time the Senate looked into it, the plan had tidied things up. The old chief executive had resigned, the cars had been dumped and about 75 staff members fired. Yet as the new chief told the committee, the plan made the changes because it chose to do so, not because the national office had compelled it: "The way I size it up," Alden Flory testified, "We run our own show. They don't."

The fragmented quality of Blue Cross's authority has thwarted its more ambitious cost control programs. In the last few years, however, the cost of health care has risen so rapidly that even the most sluggish local offices no longer can be complacent. With varying degrees of enthusiasm, they've begun the unpleasant task of denying hospitals their accustomed perks. Rate increases are not automatically accepted. In many places Blue Cross presents evidence against the construction of new hospitals and the purchase of unneeded machinery. Just last month at its annual convention in San Francisco, Blue Cross adopted a new condition of membership that for the first time will require local plans to make an effort to contain costs. Beginning next January, the head office in Chicago will have the right to audit cost cutting programs and reprimand those that fail to meet its standards.

Some local plans are less advanced in this than others. Delaware Blue Cross, for example, is still lagging behind. This year it is undergoing a public review for the first time in its life. The legislature put Blue Cross under the jurisdiction of the insurance commissioner last year and gave him the power to demand justification for—and even veto—rate increases if he finds them too large. The experience has been traumatic. Blue Cross proposed to raise its premiums by an average of 21 percent, with some rates going up by as much as 30 percent. The commissioner, David Elliott, wanted to know why. He claims to have had trouble getting necessary information from Blue Cross. The plan was reluctant to explain how it reimbursed physicians. It resisted giving out executive salary figures and copies of contracts between Blue Cross and the hospitals. Commissioner Elliott found the company stubborn and uncooperative. He said Blue Cross turned the hearings into an adversary proceeding: "Their counsel would either say this information was confidential or not available, and then the next day he would say it was available. It was very arbitrary." The commissioner eventually hired an expert consultant from New York to help out.

Elliott said that when he recommended that the

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average rate increase be cut in half, to 12 percent, Blue Cross began buying full page ads in the local paper at $1800 a shot, threatening policyholders that benefits would be cut and that "health services as we know them today would dry up," as the commissioner put it. In the end, Blue Cross went to court and persuaded the judge to overrule the commissioner and put the original 21 percent rate increase into effect. The reason for doing this, Blue Cross's spokesman said, was that "our rates are just barely sufficient for us to continue doing business."

Backward though it may seem, Delaware is ahead of some jurisdictions in watching over Blue Cross. The local plan in Washington, DC, among the larger ones with $300 million in assets, doesn't undergo any public review at all. In 1939 Congress removed it from the insurance commissioner's jurisdiction. It raises rates whenever it pleases by whatever amount it believes is necessary. No one challenges it. This year the plan raised premiums in Washington by an average of 32 percent, and some policy rates by as much as 100 percent. The year before, the average increase was larger. There has been no outcry. The insurance commissioner simply forwards all complaints he receives to Blue Cross's public relations office. The city doesn't seem to care whether the rate increases are justified or not, and the wealthy neighborhoods are more than adequately doctored. Washington has more psychiatrists per capita than any other city in the world.

Should Washington suddenly decide that public control of its local Blue Cross would be a good idea, it might encounter the kind of resistance that Delaware has met. If it persisted, it would learn what Delaware's commissioner is probably learning about now: public review may be a good thing, and bludgeoning Blue Cross may vent frustrations, but in the end this method does not stop hospitals and doctors from raising their fees. Others have followed the path that Delaware has set out on, and they have found that in a real contest of strength, the hospitals win. When hospitals feel that Blue Cross is bullying them about cost increases, they challenge its authority in court or refuse to abide by Blue Cross's rules.

Both methods were used in Pennsylvania in 1974. Pennsylvania's former insurance commissioner, Herbert Denenberg, pushed Blue Cross as far as any official has done, but his price-containment plan eventually came to a halt when the hospitals refused to cooperate. Blue Cross actually welcomed Denenberg because he gave legitimacy to the cost cutting measures it wanted to adopt. The hospitals found the program too harsh and, after months of negotiations, refused to sign contracts with Blue Cross. Instead, they billed patients directly, charging the rates that they thought were right. The patients became pawns in the struggle between Denenberg and the hospitals. Blue Cross backed down; it couldn't refuse to reimburse its subscribers for expenses they already had incurred while in the hospital. The public didn't unders nature of the battle, and would most likely hav its wrath upon Blue Cross.

Sylvia Law, in a recent book called *Blue Cros Went Wrong?*, tells the Pennsylvania story in det concludes by asking whether Blue Cross can mately represent its subscribers if it has so l leverage: "If, in the best of circumstances, Blue Cross i not capable of negotiating hospital reimbursement contracts with reasonable cost control provisions, either because it lacks the power to do so or because it is not perceived by the hospitals as having that power, then that task must be performed by a public authority."

The states with the worst inflation already have begun to do precisely that. Maryland, New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey and several others have commissions that directly regulate hospital costs, just as utility commissions control electric bills. It is a complicated business involving all the nuisance of government price control: lots of record-keeping, the use of intricate formulas to determine "reasonable cost," reference to voluminous tables of permissible fees, continuous auditing, calling of hearings, haggling over definitions. But it seems to work better than no control. The executive director of Maryland's commission, Hal Cohen, claims to have held the rate of inflation in hospital costs to 11.8 percent in 1976, compared with a national average of 14 percent.

As the states, Jimmy Carter and Joe Califano move in to control the financing system, Blue Cross has begun to innovate too. Because it is a voluntary association it cannot move as quickly as its leaders might like. But it is experimenting. It has helped launch 100 Blue Cross Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs), which are the free enterprise answer to cost control. HMOs are groups of physicians who band together to provide efficient health care for an annual fee that is fixed in advance. HMOs encourage preventive care and discourage patients from going to the hospital. HMOs founded without the help of Blue Cross are suspicious of their well-financed competitors and colleagues, whom they believe to be compromised by contact with the Establishment. Blue Cross also encourages and finances local planning offices that try to control the flow of new investments in health care. Blue Cross has launched a campaign to teach people how to keep themselves healthy and avoid visits to the doctor. Some local plans—the ones in New York, Michigan and Los Angeles, to name three—are quite aggressive in challenging what they believe to be unnecessary costs.

The most radical change Blue Cross is toying with would shift its reimbursement policy from a retroactive basis to a prospective basis. Rather than collecting all the hospital bills at the end of the term and paying every cost that had been incurred, Blue Cross under the new system would negotiate a payment figure in advance

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d attempt to hold the hospital to this sum. This method would effectively require each hospital to develop a forward-looking annual budget of the kind that most big institutions and all public agencies now have. In theory, it ought to keep hospitals within the agreed-upon maximum, and it would certainly identify any egregious money loser. About 30 Blue Cross plans are tinkering with this form of budget making; New York has used it for years. Jimmy Carter's proposal to put an annual cap on the increase in hospital costs is nothing but a federal endorsement of this eminently sane idea. If Blue Cross cannot persuade the hospitals to settle on terms of payment *in advance*, it will never get inflation under control.

Walter McNerney, president of Blue Cross, agrees that his office has not been able to provide "a uniform program for the nation" to reduce waste in hospitals. "I'm not going to sit here and tell you I'm happy with it all, but I'm not going to take a back seat either. . . . When I say our progress has been modest, take that within the context of how modest everybody's effort has been." From his perspective, it is the politicians who have failed. They are the ones who insist on building new hospitals where they are not needed and who override local decisions to restrict expenditures. That has been Blue Cross's feeling for a long time. But with Carter and Califano waging a national campaign against inflation in the hospitals, it no longer makes sense. The Hospital Association is deeply opposed to Carter's legislation. It will be interesting to see whether Blue Cross stands apart from the battle or joins up with the administration.

Eliot Marshall

Welfare won't make it so.

Puerto Rico, The 51st State?

Americans who only read of Puerto Rico in travel brochures—or when a terrorist bomb shatters skyscraper glass—must have greeted last New Year's headlines with some bewilderment. For it was on New Year's Eve that Gerald Ford came off the Vail ski slopes and proposed Puerto Rican statehood. Were we really offering this Caribbean commonwealth a place in the Union, a star on our flag? Then Jimmy Carter returned the Puerto Rican status issue to its long-held spot in oblivion. Congress should take no action, said Carter, "until the Puerto Rican people express a preference"—to remain a commonwealth, join the Union as a state, or become an independent republic. Now this was more like it: Puerto Ricans have been arguing their island's political status preference ever since the US Army invaded in 1898. Seventy-nine years later they have still come to no conclusion and under the Carter plan they will undoubtedly be debating the issue 79 years from now.

Ford's apres-ski remarks coincided with the advent in San Juan of a pro-statehood administration under the New Progressive party of Governor Carlos Romero Barcelo. His election marks the first time in Puerto Rican history that the statehood forces—allied with the mainland's Republicans—won a electoral majority against the Popular Democrats, counterpart of the mainland Democrats. The lameduck President's statement paid a political debt—the Puerto Rican delegates to the Republican national convention had delivered their four votes to Ford in expectation of his backing statehood. But, Ford spoke before consulting a single Puerto Rican, and no one in Congress took his statement the least bit seriously. And though Ford may have intended to assist statehood forces, actually he embarrassed and irritated the new Puerto Rican administration. Romero had campaigned on a pledge to strenuously avoid the status issue until he could improve the horrendous economic conditions prevailing on the island for the past four years.

Until 1973, Puerto Rico was a model of Caribbean progress. The island's industrialization program, known as Operation Bootstrap, dates from the postwar era when the father of modern Puerto Rico, four-term Governor Luis Mũnoz Marin, began luring American corporations to the island. At that time, rapid modernization seemed the only way to save Puerto Rico from the curses of high population, a plantation agricultural system and its despairing colonial mentality. In two decades, Operation Bootstrap transformed Puerto Rico from the poorhouse of the Caribbean to "a showcase of democratic development."

Few Puerto Ricans seriously question the material benefits the island has gained from its postcolonial economic association with the mainland. GNP has increased from $755 million in 1950 to $7.7 billion last year. Life expectancy has risen from 46 to 68 years in the same period, and 90 percent of the population is literate. Per capita income is $2000, far above any Latin nation, though only two-thirds of Mississippi's average income.

More than 2000 American companies have hustled south to take advantage of Operation Bootstrap's corporate tax exemptions and the seemingly limitless supply of willing factory hands. Pharmaceutical companies have moved to Puerto Rico in such great numbers that islanders often refer to their native land as "the pill capital of the world." Furthermore, a booming construction industry has blanketed the

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island with housing developments and condominiums; the bond market has buzzed with Puerto Rican issues as the commonwealth built an infrastructure of roads, docks, water and power facilities to service the industrial sector. A billion dollars worth of American food products are imported annually, along with enough automobiles and television sets to satisfy a voracious internal consumer market; and—at least through 1973—a three-billion-dollar petrochemical industry was all set to refine that "cheap foreign crude" which was supposed to serve as an artificial resource base for a century of economic growth in plastics and textiles.

But, the OPEC price surge staggered the petrochemical industry. Imported food prices soared. The construction industry collapsed, and the jittery bond market downrated Puerto Rican notes to prevent a "New York situation." Reeling under the simultaneous inflation and recession, Puerto Rico suddenly lost its attractiveness for new American investment. Two years ago, the Popular Democratic administration of Governor Rafael Hernandez Colon braked the economy sharply to restore investor confidence. The austerity measures, including new taxes, government cutbacks, and a wage freeze in the public sector, spawned massive labor unrest, sending rank and file workers straight to the arms of Mr. Romero and his New Progressives.

Today the slump remains intractable. Fully half the 3.7 million natives are calculated as living below the federal poverty line. Two thirds of the island's families subsist on federally supplied foodstamps, a $593 million annual transfusion from Washington, which, as former Governor Luis Ferre told me, "saved the island from complete economic collapse." Government economists estimate that 40 percent of the labor force may be out of work. But the despair of ordinary Puerto Ricans is best demonstrated not by the statistics, but by the very fact that they have turned, at the bottom of this depression, to—of all people—the Republicans.

Governor Romero, formerly the mayor of San Juan, is the man generally credited with having convinced the Nixon administration to extend the food stamp program to Puerto Rico. He made this accomplishment a centerpiece of his election campaign, and he argued that he could pull off the same feat with other US social programs. The new governor promises more federal public works funds, countercyclical federal stimulus, federal housing programs, federal grants, stamps and increased unemployment compensation. In essence, the governor's economic recovery program is based on the very un-Republican theory that federal spending is the best bootstrap for Puerto Rico.

The new administration's economics have a direct connection to its statehood ambitions. In the most recent island plebiscite on status, in 1967, 60 percent of the electorate favored the present commonwealth arrangement and only 39 percent favored statehood; the independence movement boycotted the plebiscite. Governor Romero signaled his strategy in a book entitled *Statehood is for the Poor*. As former Governor Ferre puts it, "Once Puerto Ricans are getting food stamps, social security, federally guaranteed home mortgages, and unemployment benefits, statehood becomes inevitable. To become independent under those circumstances would be a return to the beautiful era of the Indians." Washington's financial support of Puerto Rico, exclusive of defense costs, now amounts to two billion dollars a year. Before calling for a new status plebiscite the Romero administration hopes to double that aid over the next four years. Ironically, the American subsidy of Puerto Rico far outdoes Russia's one million-dollar-a-day support of Cuba—and one certainly doesn't hear the Cubans threatening independence from the Soviets.

Nevertheless, this "locking-in" strategy by no means guarantees a pro-statehood majority at the next plebiscite. Although Puerto Rican political alignments have generally followed the status question, islanders readily abandon status politics when it's in their economic interest to do so. The statehood movement, in fact, gained its first adherents shortly after the American invasion when local anarcho-syndicalists promoted entrance into the Union as a means of winning the eight-hour day. The independence movement, on the other hand, has never had a credible economic program and has never won more than 10 percent of the vote. Traditionally, advocating independence for Puerto Rico was a parlor game for the island's intellectual elite. In the '30s, the pro-independence Nationalists wore black shirts and borrowed a strange semi-mystical ideology from the Irish Republicans and the Spanish Falangists. The '60s wed the independence and student antiwar movements, but their neo-Cuban socialism lacked any appeal whatsoever for the Puerto Rican masses, and the movement soon fragmented. Extremist remnants such as the FALN are now "carrying the struggle" to the mainland with their pipe bombs.

The Popular Democrats were the first party to declare explicitly that a social-economic program took precedence over the long and stultifying status debate. Accordingly, Luis Mũnoz Marin created the Commonwealth as a means of industrializing the economy and raising living standards. Only in the past 10 years since Munoz's retirement has the Commonwealth been thought of as a permanent status option. But by this time commonwealth status is strongly identified with Bootstrap economics and this relationship was a major reason for the Popular Party's debacle at the polls last November.

Puerto Ricans now criticize Operation Bootstrap on two counts. Complete dependence on investment and imports from the mainland have left Puerto Rico highly vulnerable to the US business cycle, and created a

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pseudo-American lifestyle centering around the automobile, the ranch house, the hamburger, and, of course, television. Little public or private capital has been employed to modernize farming. As Governor Romero protested in his first State of the Commonwealth address: "While we import most of our food, most of our land is cultivated inefficiently or lies abandoned."

Dependence on the mainland has also left the island without an indigenous entrepreneurial class, so crucial to the success of industrial revolutions in underdeveloped lands. Local capital formation is practically nonexistent and Puerto Ricans are far more likely to put their money into real estate speculation or bank it abroad. In addition, the Commonwealth has never required American companies to train Puerto Ricans to improve their lot in the industrialized economy. In the studies made prior to the Commonwealth's purchase of the Puerto Rican Telephone Company in 1974 it came to light that after 60 years of operation on the island, ITT's subsidiary was still run by an all-white, all-male, continental management team. Not a single Puerto Rican had ever held a top executive position.

The island might still have survived the recession had it not been for Operation Bootstrap's second and grosser failure—the failure to resolve the island's profound population problem. Even in the heyday of economic growth Puerto Rico exported surplus population at a frightening rate. Two million Puerto Ricans presently live on the mainland, but even so the island's population density is 925 people per square mile, higher than India's. Until the onset of recession, the mainland *barrios* served as a spillover for Puerto Rican migrants. Now, however, the mainland recession has reversed the flow of migration back to the island. Last year, Puerto Ricans streaming homeward accounted for a two percent population increase. The great tragedy is that prodigal Puerto Ricans find themselves as redundant in San Juan and Ponce as they are in New York and Chicago. Worse, the world recession has driven a wave of legal and illegal Latin aliens to Puerto Rico—140,000 in the last three years. Operation Bootstrap simply can't provide jobs for these people. As Teodoro Moscoso, Bootstrap's director for 25 years, frankly admits: "There's just no way. The unemployed of 20 years from now were born yesterday." Moscoso not long ago outraged the island's Catholic majority by publicly suggesting that birth control pills be poured into the water supply. He retired from office shortly thereafter.

Governor Romero has assumed the post of Operation Bootstrap's chief critic, but his designs on the US Treasury do not assure a revived economy. For one thing, Congress may tire of the costly pump-priming operation. Last year, Representative Albert Quie (R, Minn.) introduced legislation to make Puerto Ricans pay federal income taxes like ordinary Americans (under the Commonwealth compact, Puerto Ricans escape the 1040). The Quie legislation was roundly defeated by congressional liberals. But with Republicans now in power in San Juan, mainland liberals will be under pressure from island Democrats to thwart Governor Romero's efforts to achieve statehood by maximizing dependency on Washington.

Statehood is also made a doubtful prospect by Puerto Rico's connection to American multinationals. US corporations have provided 150,000 new jobs for Puerto Rico, but they are there because Puerto Rico is neither a country nor a state. Independence would place Puerto Rico outside the American tariff, making it unprofitable for US companies to carry on their export manufacturing. Statehood would render the islands corporate tax exemption illegal. So, both status options are seen as precipitating a devastating flight of American capital. The presence of five billion dollars in American fixed investment favors the status quo: Puerto Ricans cannot aford to throw the Yankees out, but neither can they afford to become Yankees.

Jonathan Evan Maslow

Jonathan Evan Maslow is a free-lance writer in New York.

Atlanta calls AFSCME's bluff.

Crying Wurf

White liberal Jerry Wurf recently spent $60,000 attacking the city of Atlanta and its black liberal mayor, Maynard Jackson, in advertisements in major newspapers and national magazines (including *TNR*). "The Falcons aren't the only losing team in Atlanta," one ad began. "Try City Hall." Decrying four years of "bickering, squabbling, phonyism and cronyism" under Jackson, the advertisement raised the spectre of ultimate disaster: "Will Atlanta join New York and the other troubled cities of the Northeast? It could. Unless Atlanta can put together a winning team at the top. The Falcons have hired a new coach. It's time for one at City Hall." Jackson is up for reelection later this year.

Wurf is the international president of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME—pronounced *aff*-skmee), and the advertising is paid for by the dues of his 750,000 members. AFSCME's membership, which has tripled in size in the 13 years Wurf has been president, includes hospital workers, highway laborers, law enforcement and correction officers, sanitation workers and custodians,

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clerks, secretaries, social workers and technicians. Many of these, including those in Atlanta, are among the lowest paid workers in the public sector. When the anti-Jackson, anti-Atlanta ads began running a couple months ago, Wurf's local affiliate and Jackson's negotiators were deadlocked over cost-of-living and wage increases, with little progress in sight. One day after the first ads ran, AFSCME's Atlanta local called a strike and 1300 city workers left their jobs. Five days later, the mayor summarily fired over a thousand of them and began hiring replacements. Within three weeks most AFSCME members were back at work at their old wages.

The timing of the strike and the national ad campaign was entirely coincidental, Wurf says. Indeed, the ads were initially devised in the hope of avoiding a strike, and the Atlanta local called the walkout decision without ever notifying the Washington office. Maynard Jackson says the strike and the ads were purposely coordinated. He says the attack on Atlanta is the first stage of an AFSCME southern strategy over the next three or four years aimed especially at black mayors and the cities they govern. Jackson believes Wurf wanted to bring Atlanta to its knees, and advertising in national publications was part of that strategy.

National advertising is not new in labor disputes. Once when the United Auto Workers was negotiating with the automakers Walter Reuther took out ads in the *Washington Post* and *New York Times* calling for the manufacturers to "Open the Books!" to buttress his argument that no one actually knew how much it cost to make a car. It is also a common practice for AFSCME to advertise locally during negotiations. But Wurf's national campaign of villification of Jackson added a new dimension to bargaining in the public sector.

Public employees are caught in a squeeze. As cities struggle against eroding tax bases and increasing costs of public services, one easy and popular technique for local politicians is to hold the line on municipal salaries. "During negotiations," says one AFSCME strategist, "our ads are geared to getting our case across and they're reinforced by public attention in the media. It's one of the only times, short of a strike, that you can get people to focus on public employee problems."

Usually the issue in negotiations is not whether a salary increase is warranted, but whether there's enough money in the budget to accommodate demands. "Public budgets are a piece of fiction," says William Hamilton, one of Wurf's Washington aides. "They amount to loose shorthand projections." AFSCME produces its own budget analyses. It combs through municipal and state budgets for uncollected taxes, unspent appropriations and revenue surpluses, then runs detailed advertisements in city or state capital newspapers to challenge official protestations that no money is available to meet the union's wage demands. In Baltimore, for example, AFSCME has been running ads telling Mayor William Donald Schaefer where to find eight million dollars of additional city revenues to avoid curtailment of services and the loss of jobs. A year ago, the union hired an outside econometrician to analyze the Massachusetts state budget, then ran ads to show Governor Michael Dukakis where funds for cost of living and wage increases were sequestered amid the figures. And, in Atlanta, local ads directed Maynard Jackson's attention to revenues consistently underestimated and surplus funds carried over from one year to the next which might be transferred to raise the salaries of workers who made an average of $7400 a year. Public officials insist the advertisements have no effect on negotiations, but AFSCME officials are convinced they are effective in bringing their case before a suspicious, tax-pressed public, which might otherwise automatically presume against the union.

Wurf also is spending over one million dollars this year on a union variety of corporate image advertising. Oil companies like Mobil and Exxon shifted from product promotion (better mileage, surer starts, higher octane) a couple of years ago when they discovered that public opinion was faulting them even more than the Arabs for higher prices, shortages and long gasoline lines. Now, you will have noticed, the oil companies are promoting the variety of ways they serve the nation through research and exploration for new energy sources, etc.

The best example of pure image projection in labor advertising is the current, highly successful International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) "Look for the union label" musical television campaign, geared to reach a large mass of viewers (on the premiere of "Roots," for example). The ad and song are designed to convey a friendly, dignified feeling about union products and union people, which the ILGWU hopes will help overcome some of the innate hostility to unions in its most fertile organizing territory, the South. AFSCME's campaign costs about a quarter of what the garment workers are spending and is designed to make a more sophisticated pitch to a more sophisticated audience. "Our ads are pointed at that minuscule section of the public that allegedly forms public opinion," says Jerry Wurf. "We're trying to reach people who have input into policy."

Unions in general and public employee unions in particular don't start off with a good public image, and that image tends to suffer even further whenever municipalities and workers square off in sick-outs, slowdowns and strikes. The national ads, which run in about 20 East coast newspapers and magazines with a generally progressive readership, are intended to counteract a new breed of conservatism with which the union finds itself dealing. Wurf calls it "the [Jerry] Brown syndrome." Americans are suspicious of government in general, and particularly of waste in government services, so public employees become an easy target. Public officials, elected as liberals, are

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beginning to adopt themes like "fiscal integrity" and "tough fiscal management." Wurf says, "By that they mean worse schools, worse health care, worse environmental protection." AFSCME's advertising is designed to attack the notion that cutting some services and contracting out others to private business is a realistic solution to problems of waste and declining revenues in the public sector. The ad campaign has a central theme, that "the business of government is people," and no matter what politicians say, cutbacks in human services hurt people. "The latest treatment for mental patients: Turn them out," says one headline, and the ad copy consists of examples of how the mentally ill were "deinstitutionalized" as a way for the states to avoid their mental health responsibilities in California, New York, Massachusetts and Illinois.

Another purpose of the ads is to create a progressive public image for AFSCME (like that enjoyed by the UAW), so the ads also attack distorted governmental priorities, focusing on the Pentagon and the B-1 bomber. If you want to cut government waste, the message says, begin here—not with vital human services. Illustrated sometimes by drawings of the B-1 spewing people out its bomb bay, the ad charges: "One of these could educate every kid in Cincinnati. . . . Or finance the entire budget for the city of Atlanta."

Atlanta. The world's next great city. The city too busy to hate. The city that has spent up to $300,000 a year for the past 17 years on self-promotion. The city that opened a New York office to attract new, clean, labor intensive businesses from all over the Northeast quadrant and the regional headquarters of multinational corporations. The city with a Chamber of Commerce that coined the slogan "The New South," then spent enough to make it stick. Atlanta is the city Jerry Wurf could not bring to its knees.

Maynard Jackson's theory that he was only the first of a series of southern black mayors AFSCME had marked for special treatment is self-aggrandizing. As vice-mayor back in 1970, Jackson marched with striking city workers in a dispute with mayor Sam Massell. He won the 1973 mayoral election with the support and contributions of public employees. Those workers couldn't reasonably have expected this mayor's current tough fiscal rhetoric. "We simply could not afford to bargain with AFSCME on the economic issues," Jackson said. "You know, *nemo dat quod non habet*; you know, you cannot give what you do not have. I will not be the first mayor since 1937 to put this city in debt." Nor could they have expected his rigidity in negotiations, nor his precipitous firings. Wurf believes Jackson has broken his commitments to city workers and should be put out of office. And Wurf hoped to help with that.

Wurf also resents Atlanta's image as an enlightened city. "The Chamber of Commerce was buying up a progressive image on the cheap," he says. "They expect to build their hotels and banks and businesses on $3.50 an hour wages, no medical care and no pensions. Maynard Jackson wants to work both sides of the street, come off as a liberal mayor who cares about the working man and at the same time, keep Atlanta an open shop."

Atlanta is by no means a union town, a fact that's not lost on businesses pondering relocation. "The Chamber would never openly pitch cheap labor," says a local, non-AFSCME labor leader, "but over cocktails they're sure to mention that with the rural dominance in our legislature, the Georgia right-to-work law will never be repealed."

Did the ads hurt Atlanta? Initially the Chamber reacted exactly as Wurf hoped, charging that it would cost the city a million dollars to repair the damage caused by AFSCME. But that estimate has changed. A chamber spokesman says now, "The mentality of the corporate leaders we're trying to reach is that everybody crumbles to the unions. If Atlanta—even with a black liberal mayor—can still repulse the union grab, maybe there's still hope there. Anybody who turns his back on us because the garbage workers lost their strike wasn't a very good prospect anyway."

Wurf's hope that the anti-Atlanta, anti-Jackson ads might lead to the mayor's defeat this fall doesn't seem to have worked out either. The issues of city workers aside, Maynard Jackson has been a progressive mayor. Atlantans, black and white—and including some in the local labor movement—believe his most important contributions have been in making City Hall, long a preserve of the white establishment, accessible to blacks, and in giving neighborhoods a role in city government. An early spring poll, before the garbage strike, showed Jackson with solid black backing, but 60 percent of Atlanta's white voters rated his performance as fair or poor, and the downtown business establishment seemed certain to field a candidate against him.

Richard Kattell, president of both the largest bank in Georgia and the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce says the ads had a dramatic effect locally: "The backfire here was double. The black community took offense at the ads because they attacked Maynard Jackson and the white community reacted negatively because they attacked Atlanta." As a result, though his liberal image is tarnished and his labor base has been damaged for the future, Jackson has inherited the support of the Chamber and the banks, and he will have no serious opposition for re-election as Mayor.

Other mayors and governors probably needn't worry about getting the same treatment AFSCME gave Maynard Jackson. Hard sell, negative advertising, political or otherwise, is always a bet against long odds. In Atlanta, the community was hostile to nearly everything Jerry Wurf was saying about its town. Consequently it rejected everything he said about its mayor as well. Wurf seems to regard the Atlanta campaign as an experiment that failed. The strike has

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been broken; Maynard Jackson is assured a second term; the climate for bargaining could hardly be worse; and the image of Atlanta in the advertising market that the Chamber of Commerce seeks to reach is probably improved. "We didn't expect the reaction we got in Atlanta," Wurf admits. "We thought the Atlanta establishment would recognize that Maynard Jackson's usefulness had ended. Atlanta was a special case and we screwed it up. But we're there to stay. We'll do our damndest to make Atlanta a union town."

Ken Bode

Presidents as physicians.

The Laying On of Hands

by Henry Fairlie

In the middle ages, and continuing well into modern times, the kings of France and England touched for scrofula, a disease which doctors today call tubercular adenitis. It was endemic in certain regions of Europe, and the kings claimed that a simple touch of their hands could cure it. So the disease was called *mal le roi* in France, and "the King's Evil" in England.

The monarchs were astute. Although one or two of the early kings claimed to touch for other diseases, they quickly decided to confine themselves to scrofula. It is a disfiguring rather than a wasting disease, and hardly ever fatal. Moreover, there are remissions and the sores—"putrid" and giving off a "foetid odour" as contemporary accounts put it—from time to time go away (and come back). Therefore there was a fair chance that many of those who were touched would seem to be cured in time for the recovery to be attributed to the royal fingers; and the uncured of course did not sue.

People of all classes believed in the cure, crossing Europe to have their sores touched; the monarchs were not entirely cynical, to some extent believing it also. It was what the great French Historian Marc Bloch, in his brilliant study, *The Royal Touch*, calls a "collective error." Bloch adds that it was "a more harmless one . . . than most of those which bestrew the human past." He does not scoff at the beliefs of another age, seeking only to understand them, and we might look at some of our own credulity before we wonder at that of the past.

There is evidence of a "collective error" in our own time that is hardly less of a delusion: what I will call "the presidential touch," the elevation of presidents to the status of physicians to the people. The presidency now seems to operate primarily by a laying on of hands. I wrote against this exercise of the presidential touch in *The Kennedy Promise*, although I did not then use the phrase. I compared President Kennedy not to the French and English monarchs, but to the Byzantine emperors who appeared before their people, sheathed in gold, suspended between earth and heaven. One had hoped that by now the presidency would have returned to being a normal institution, engaged in the mundane business of politics. But it does not seem to be so.

Let us consider two small instances. It is only a few months since President Ford rolled up his sleeve for the cameras and had a shot for swine flu, which was then thought to be spreading like the yellow fever across the Pacific. No sooner had Ford left the White House than the cameras gave us pictures of President Carter rolling

Etching of Charles II of England touching for scrofula by Robert White (1684).

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up his sleeve to give his blood to the blood bank. I gazed awestruck at the second of these apparitions. Are Republicans warned before the blood of Jimmy Carter is introduced into their veins? Do people clamor to receive the President's blood, just as in the middle ages they used to drink the infected water in which the monarchs had dipped their fingers after touching the sores of scrofula victims?

Presidents seem more and more to be expected to be physicians. They make visits to the people as if these are their patients. It cannot be long before President Carter goes to Alaska and stays the night in an igloo, to lay hands on an eskimo family as it bunks down for the winter, with its pile of raw fish on one side and its television set on the other. If he cannot find any eskimos who live in igloos anymore, he will no doubt spend the night with the sea lions, laying his hands on them. From there, it will not be long before he goes to spend the night with a worried sheep rancher in Montana. But since sheep ranchers tend to be robust and unworried, and suspicious of strangers, he will no doubt spend the night with an ailing sheep, laying his hands on it. By the time that he runs for office again, Carter may well have laid hands on every scrofulous animal in America; and the cameras will be there, as the physician makes his visitations and heals.

Of course it is television that demands these ceremonies. Television is not allowed to go where most of the things that matter are taking place. Its cameras do not get into secret meetings and private negotiations. The printed press can publish a reasonably elaborate report of what it learns has happened at a private meeting, but this is not satisfactory for a medium that depends on pictures. Instead TV searches for the ceremonial aspects of politics, and especially of the presidency. TV cameras encourage Presidents to lay on hands. Television would build an igloo for Carter to stay in, and provide the ailing sheep.

John Kennedy was shot on the second of his campaign progresses through the country a full year before the actual election. If one keeps one's ear close to the ground in Washington these days, one can already hear stirrings of series of presidential progresses to be made by Jimmy Carter starting some time after the mid-term elections in 1978. When one thinks that there will also be Rosalynn and Lillian and Chip and Amy, and perhaps Billy to make sure of the wet vote, it is hard not to think of the royal progresses of the past.

To move Elizabeth I on a royal progress required "from four to six hundred carts, and 2400 horses loaded with furniture, bedding, tapestries, kitchen utensils, library books, animal fodder and the personal effects of each member of the household from the Queen to the court jester and the locksmith." None of them seem to have carried their own bags, so every courtier and nobleman and councilor in turn brought his own retainers and servants. When Henry VIII went to Calais, his court was reduced in size for the journey, but it nevertheless ate in one day, in meat and poultry alone, 6 oxen, 8 calves, 40 sheep, 12 pigs, 36 "capons gras," 96 "good capons," 7 swans, 20 storks, 34 pheasants, 192 partirdges and the same number of cocks, 56 herons, 84 pullets, 720 larks, 240 pigeons, 24 peacocks, and 192 plovers and teals. The list is intriguing: exactly three times as many larks as pigeons, which is understandable, for larks are small. But who got the few peacocks, and who had to be satisfied with the plovers and teals?

We may think that we do not have progresses like that these days, but the truth is that the President is now followed by a substantial retinue of people with notebooks and cameras, and even the touring households themselves are not all that modest. Rosalynn Carter took a personal retinue of a quarter of a hundred with her to Latin America, including her hairdresser, as well as the accompanying band of reporters; and when one thinks that a royal progress in the past used to last many weeks and often several months, the proportions now are not much out of scale. Very little hard news comes out of it all. But the President or his wife is seen to lay on hands, as Rosalynn Carter gave the presidential touch to two American missionaries in Brazil.

The last three Presidents all have promised to heal the nation, to bind up its wounds, to make it whole. But Presidents are not physicians, they do not have the royal touch. It is not their task to heal. Yet this is what we go on asking of them, in so far as the press and television speak for us. The people are alienated; Presidents should excite their faith. The people are polarized; Presidents should bring them together. The people are indifferent; Presidents should stimulate their interest. More often than not, the press and television have invented these diseases of the people, and then demand that Presidents should cure them. *Ce roi est un grand magicien*, said Montesquieu ironically in *The Persian Letters*: and it is as magicians that Presidents are now being hawked, by themselves and their advisers, largely in response to the importunacies of television and the press.

Although there is much in the notion of "the imperial presidency" as it has been propounded in recent years, fundamentally the idea is on the wrong track. It is not the power of the presidency that has grown to be objectionable. In many ways, it is still a very weak institution, as Presidents keep finding out when they reach the White House. Given the necessary role of the United States in the world today, a severe reduction of the executive power would be a disaster. Congress is not made to govern, it is made to obstruct, a very worthy function, which it performs with its own skills. What is needed is not a reduction in the power of the presidency, but a strengthening of the separate and different roles of other institutions in the system. I agree with Aaron Wildavsky and Nelson Polsby that

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one of the most important changes would be a strengthening of the roles of the two major parties.

What needs lessening is not the *power* of the presidency, but its *prestige*. The increase in its prestige is largely the result of the steady cultivation in this century, and especially in the past few decades, of the direct relationship between the President and the people. Every President since John Kennedy has, in his own way, sought to circumvent the political process by relying ultimately on his direct relationship with the people. It misled Kennedy, it trapped Johnson, it annihilated Nixon, it befuddled Ford; and there is too much evidence that Carter is deceived by the same illusion. If ever they get into trouble, they think that they can appear before the people, in person or on television, and simply lay on hands; and at their touch the pus will be released from the sores of the nation.

But the intermediaries between the President and the people hold the real political power; and these intermediaries are the most likely to warn in time that follies are being committed. The President is not a physician, he is a politician, who should be engaged in politics, and not in healing or magic. Too many Presidents have been distracted in recent years by the partial truth that only the President is the representative of the whole people. Perhaps no single member of Congress represents them as he does, but its two houses collectively represent them in ways he does not.

Marc Bloch recounts an episode on 27 April 1340 when the ambassador of Edward III of England appeared before the Doge of Venice to contest the claim of Philip IV to the throne of France. He demanded that, if "Philip of Valois" was indeed a king, he should prove it in one of two traditional ways—either by "exposing himself to hungry lions, for lions never attack a true king; or let him perform the miraculous healing of the sick, as all other true kings are wont to do." Bloch has severe doubts whether the English ambassador ever delivered this speech (although it bears some resemblance to the way in which the English have always talked to foreigners) but it reminds me of the behavior of American Presidents in recent years.

They are always asking proofs of royalty from others in the political world. Let you represent the whole people! Let you heal them! Let you touch for scrofula! Let you survive in the lion's den of the White House, to which every hungry interest in the realm at last comes! But it is a dangerous game to play, for it is worth remembering that each of the past three Presidents has been expelled from office. Johnson was so weakened that he could not run for reelection; Nixon was forced to resign; Ford was even denied the chance of a full term. So much for the direct relationship with the people! So much for the presidential touch.

Star Wars for real? It's spacey!!

The General Goes Zap

by Morton Kondracke

If Twentieth Century-Fox can attract swarms of adults to see a kids' zap'em-up movie like *Star Wars*, why can't a retired Air Force general write a space thriller just for grownups? He can. In fact, General George J. Keegan has done it. Recently retired as the Air Force's chief of intelligence, Keegan has used his inside knowledge of modern weapons research to compose a scenario so realistic that high government officials, members of Congress and major elements of the press have been forced to treat it as non-fiction. The story does have drawbacks compared to *Star Wars*. The movie has that galactic dimension, the sweep of an interstellar civil war. Keegan is weak on characterization, and he could use a friendly computer, perhaps, for comic relief.

But Keegan has the essence of a good story here: a godless imperial power is determined to take over the world. Just one planet, mind you, but it's ours, which will hold people's attention. The godless power has built up a fearsome arsenal of giant missiles with which to threaten the Land of the Free. It would fire them without mercy or demand abject surrender were it not for defensive rockets the Free maintain to shoot back if attacked. The Free—so innocent, so moral, so blind—threw away a chance, once, to destroy the godless first or demand *their* surrender. Now we are paying the consequences. Secretly, the godless are developing super weapons—Death Stars, we might call them. These are satellites equipped with high-energy lasers

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and nuclear-powered proton ray guns. The godless master plan, as only a few stout souls among the Free understand, is to orbit the Death Stars one day and use the lasers—bzzt!—to blind the satellites that the Free use to warn of impending attack. Then the godless could launch their super rockets and if the Free tried to fire back—Zap! Pow!—proton beam death rays would knock them out of the sky.

If any of the Free missiles got through, no matter. The godless had prepared for war by secretly digging shelters underground for all its important workers, officials and industries, not really caring what happened to the rest. After the war, the godless would control the world. Why, they might even win without a fullscale war; just be demonstrating their power, they might force the Free to give in.

Good triumphs in *Star Wars*, thanks in no small part to an aged character played by Alec Guinness, who fights evil by preaching the faith ("The Force be with you") and wielding a crucifix-like Sword of Light. In Keegan's story, Guiness's counterpart is—who else?—a retired Air Force general who, slashing away with mighty news leaks, arouses the sleepy Land of the Free to build its own Death Stars—better ones, and just in time.

Star Wars is good, clean G-rated science fiction, and Keegan's story might be, too, except that a lot of normally sensible people believe it's true. The General himself believes it, he's got the editors of *Aviation Week* magazine believing it, and some people at CBS believe it too. *Aviation Week*, a respected aerospace publication, carried a 7000 word story in its May 2 issue, on alleged Soviet progress in beam weapon technology. An accompanying editorial began, "The Soviet Union has achieved a technical breakthrough in high-energy physics application that may soon provide it with a directed-energy beam weapon capable of neutralizing the entire United States ballistic missile force and checkmating this country's strategic doctrine." The editorial charged that "the triumphant Soviet shout of 'check and mate'" might come "in the early 1980s," though "the fact that this country still has a chance of avoiding a crippling technological surprise that could render its entire strategic missile force ineffective is due to the courageous, dogged and perceptive work of a handful of US Air Force intelligence specialists who polarized around the leadership of Maj. Gen. George Keegan Jr."

High esteem for *Aviation Week* got the story big play in the nation's press and top-level attention in the government. Despite denials and reassurances from President Carter, the Pentagon and the CIA, the CBS Evening News carried a report on the alleged threats, illustrated with action animation. The Soviets, reported correspondent Ike Pappas, are working on a "space bomb," a satellite loaded with explosives that could pull alongside US spy satellites and destroy them, with "catastrophic" results. Pappas added that this "crude" weapon "seems like a peashooter" compared with a potential "superkiller" laser satellite, "capable in theory of firing its searing beam at a target satellite hundreds of miles away [to] literally burn [its] insides out." And, "meanwhile, fears are increasing that the Russians may be trying to produce an even more fearsome weapon, a huge satellite able to fire supercharged atomic particles" at US missiles in flight—"a kind of Star Trekkian death ray."

General Keegan appeared on the CBS report to say there is evidence that the Soviets have achieved a "staggering breakthrough" in powering the particle beams. If they have, Pappas added, "the American theory of deterrence through massive nuclear missile retaliation might be neutralized, leaving the United States vulnerable to attack." Keegan allowed as how the situation is "very serious." CBS balanced its coverage with a brief statement from Defense Secretary Harold Brown that the alleged Soviet capability to shoot down missiles with charged particle beams "has no basis in fact," and that he doubts such a weapons system is in prospect in the foreseeable future. But CBS gave Keegan's views the final word, suggesting that US defense scientists were blind to Soviet advances. Viewers could be forgiven a quake of fear that, after 30 years of false alarms, the Russians finally were coming—from space!

America can come back off Red Alert. What we are witnessing here is an especially dramatic new maneuver in the never-ending struggle within the Land of the Free for dominance over strategic weapons policy. US defense planners are divided into two schools—the "counterforcers" and the "assured destructionists." Oversimplifying, counterforcers believe that it is possible to fight and win nuclear wars, that the Russians know it and that the United States should be prepared to wage them, too. They advocate building highly accurate missiles capable of destroying enemy rockets in their silos and developing means—civil defense or anti-missile systems—to protect the US population. Assured destructionists think that any nuclear conflict eventually will destroy civilization and that everything possible must be done to deter it. They favor weapons—the missile submarine is a favorite—that can survive a Soviet attack and devastate Russia in retaliation.

Much of the time, the two sides behave like rival orders of monks, conducting disputation in obscure journals and at closed-and-classified, highly mathematical seminars at lovely country retreats. At other times, however, usually when there is a change of administrations in Washington or when one side seems to have gotten the upper hand, a fierce rumble breaks out that makes newspaper headlines. Usually, the side that is losing goes public first, charging that, if this kind of thing keeps up, the country is headed for disaster.

Such a fight is being waged right now, though it is hard to tell for sure who is winning. Assured

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destructionists took most of the top defense posts in the Carter administration. But counterforcers led by Senator Henry Jackson and former Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Nitze showed in the confirmation fight over Arms Control Director Paul Warnke (an AD type) that they have the strength to defeat any strategic arms treaty with the Soviet Union they do not like. Carter is presumed to be an assured destructionist, both because of his pattern of appointments and because of his military background on nuclear submarines. But the President seems constrained to side with the counterforcers, or at least compromise with them, on SALT and decisions on weapons such as the Mark 12-A missile warhead, the B-1 bomber and the MX missile, and research toward neutron bombs that will kill people but leave their buildings and equipment intact.

The current dispute is being fought along reasonably conventional lines with assured destructionists arguing that the United States already has the weapons it needs to deter war and shouldn't build expensive new ones that might provoke yet more weapons-building by the Soviets. The counter-forces, through their several institutes, think tanks and public committees, are making the case that Soviet advances threaten deterrence and that the United States needs to build new arms to meet the challenge. For 30 years, tension between moderate exponents of the two schools has produced a defense policy that may not be a cost analyst's delight, but has helped to deter World War III.

Besides the moderates, each camp has its zealots. Attracting little attention, there are a few assured destruction militants who claim that 20 nuclear submarines—and nothing else—would carry more than enough US retaliatory power to prevent war. Counterforce zealots, usually the most colorful animals in the strategic menagerie, tend to attract lots of publicity trying to prove that the Soviet Union will have us incinerated or in chains the day after tomorrow unless we MOBILIZE THIS MINUTE. General Keegan is one of these, and his target is not only the Soviet Union, but the theory of deterrence.

Successive US administrations, Keegan wrote recently, led the country "down the garden path of history" by failing to prepare to fight nuclear wars. "I am impressed by the soundness of the Soviet literature on these matters. The Soviets have correctly attended to the knitting of war and strategy. They have determined that a nation can survive a nuclear holocaust; and they have proceeded to get on with the business of being capable of initiating, waging and prevailing in a nuclear conflict." In December and January, Keegan asserted that the Soviets are superior to the United States in all the regular measures of nuclear power—size of rockets, size of warheads, possibly even number of warheads. In May, he claimed they are trying for a knockout with proton beams and lasers.

Keegan's assessment of the US-Soviet missile balance was considered a bit incendiary even by his fellow counterforcers, but was only gingerly denied by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who said the US *could* fall behind, but hadn't yet. Keegan's *Star Wars* scenario is downright spacey, derived from making the worst possible assumptions about Soviet progress in unconventional technology. In an interview with *Science* magazine, Lieutenant General Daniel O. Graham, former head of the Defense Intelligence Agency, said that "one worst-case analysis might be right, but something that depends on a whole group of them never is."

General Keegan did not concoct his star war scenario entirely from imagination. The Soviet Union and the United States both are "working on" satellite killers, high energy lasers, particle beams and some weapons that even Buck Rogers didn't anticipate. In the 1980s and 1990s, according to congressional testimony from Pentagon advanced projects experts, the United States may have "fire and forget" bombs that wait for their targets to show up; satellites that hold position over enemy territory, detect even small movements on the ground and transmit continuous pictures back to our side; computer systems that receive and organize intelligence data, warn officials that a crisis is impending and even recommend options. The Pentagon also is doing "biocybernetics" research to train human brains to receive information and render decisions faster.

Of all the advanced projects being studied, space-borne high-energy laser guns seem the most ripe for development in both the United States and the Soviet Union. Laser rays get diffused in air, so space-to-ground death rays are far off. Pentagon statements indicate our side is thinking of space lasers as ways of defending our warning and communications satellites against Soviet satellite killers. Presumably, ours could also kill their warning and communication satellites as well. In theory, the side that shoots its squadrons of laser satellites into orbit first can blind and deafen its enemy literally with the speed of light, then launch a nuclear attack. But, there are some problems in reality. Neither side, so far as our side can see and will tell, has perfected the laser devices, the focusing mechanisms or the tracking and firing controls necessary to burn enemy satellites in space. Putting laser guns into orbit will take huge expenditures of a kind that neither side seems to be making yet. The United States intends to spend about $25 million this year, and Soviet efforts are estimated to be at about the same level. The Pentagon anticipates that prototype laser weapons will be built in the early 1980s—it is not clear that they would be aboard satellites, even then—and might be available for combat in the late part of the decade.

The Carter administration is concerned about anti-satellite developments and has suggested in a recent speech that the US and Soviet Union agree to ban them. It is not clear whether he was referring to lasers, to

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explosive "space bombs" or both, but Pentagon officials say that neither technology would guarantee military victory for the side that perfected it. US missiles are able to hit Soviet targets without satellites, according to the Pentagon, and an attack on one of our satellites would immediately signal a war alert.

The major item in Keegan's space war arsenal, particle beams that could knock down missiles in flight, are even more distant and speculative. The Pentagon refuses to deal point-by-point with the Keegan claims as conveyed in *Aviation Week*, claiming it would reveal too much about what US intelligence has learned about Soviet ABM developments. However, Pentagon scientists who would welcome additional funding for their own death ray research claim there is no evidence that the Soviet Union is close to the breakthroughs required for satellite-borne particle beams. Such rays require the kind of power plants and energy storage facilities used for lighting a small city, and switching to release it in huge, sudden surges. Even if giant generators, capacitors and particle accelerators can be orbited, US scientists say it would be as hard to direct an ABM particle beam at a moving missile as it would be to fire another missile at it—harder, in fact, because the beam would have to hit the missile, while an anti-missile missile would only have to explode nearby.

By all the evidence that backward 20th century reporting methods can gather, General Keegan's alarms seem to be wildly out of line with reality—but only with contemporary reality. Eventually, we probably *will* have death rays and laser beams and killer satellites. Eventually, the United States and the Soviet Union may even acquire the kind of weaponry pictured in *Star Wars*, the kind that can destroy a planet with a single Zap! But even that would not be the ultimate weapon or the ultimate deterent. There will always be a General Keegan to charge that the Soviets have a secret plan to colonize Mars.

Franco's ghost is laid to rest.

Spain at the Polls

by Allen Joseph

Seville

The Spanish conflict which began so bloodily 41 years ago, appears finally to have ended on June 15, when Spaniards held their first general election since January 1936. The class divisions and ideological hostilities that created the "two Spains" go back at least as far as 1836, when Mariano José de Lana, the *enfant terrible* of Spanish Romanticism, mourned from a cemetery on All Souls' Day, "Here lies half of Spain, dead of the other half." A century later Franco and the Generals staged a repeat performance, leaving half of Spain dead, exiled, jailed or silenced at the end of the Civil War. Spain's being whole again and democracy's return only a year and a half after Franco's death is a result of the admirable leadership of Juan Carlos and his Prime Minister, Adolfo Suarez. But it is also demonstrable proof of the Spanish people's urgent desire to govern themselves.

The political echoes of 1936 are as remarkable as the longevity and vitality of some of the protagonists: Rafael Alberti—one of the foremost prewar poets and a Communist just returned from 40 years in exile—was a candidate for office, and "La Pasionaria"—back from Russia—was again making speeches to her Asturian constituency. Students of Gerald Brenan's *Spanish Labyrinth* and Hugh Thomas's *The Spanish Civil War* will recognize the acronyms of the familiar workers' groups, UGT and CNT, along with the Anarchists. Despite the fervor of the extremists of both sides who plastered the country with Communist and Fascist posters and staged huge rallies—the most ardent surely the 100,000 at a Communist rally outside Madrid, spirits undamped despite downpours and impassioned by the presence of Melina Mercouri—it was clear almost from the start, that the true contest was a slightly lop-sided one between Suarez's centrist coalition and Felipe Gonzalez's Socialist party.

But unpredictable elements remained. Ten days before the election, terrorists attempted to blow up the electrical grid that encircles Madrid. They succeeded in part, leaving 100,000 *madrileños* without power. That same Sunday two members of the *guardia civil*—national police—were assassinated in Barcelona. No one seemed

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sure which extremists were to blame. The Basque Provinces festered the entire time; bombs exploded there by the dozens, and the industrialist Ybarra was kidnapped by ETA, the Basque terrorist group. Early on the morning of the election a bomb blast that injured six people awakened us in Seville, and the next morning a Seville daily announced that if all the bomb threats received had been real and the bombs had exploded, the city would no longer exist. In Cordoba two bombs exploded the same morning.

Matters of security were by no means the only uncertainty. The largest unknown quantity was surely Spain's long stretch of 40 apolitical years. Franco used the label *Movimiento Nacional* as a kind of slogan with which to shroud his dictatorship, but this hardly counts as politics. Until June 15, only people 62 or over ever had voted in Spain. Two-thirds of the current Spanish population was not yet born during the Civil War, let alone during the Republic. Thus the majority of the Spanish people not only had not voted, they quite simply had never understood their country—until a year and a half ago—without Franco. With somewhere between 150 and 200 political parties, depending on how you count them, scrambling for votes under such circumstances, the Spanish people faced a genuinely perplexing situation. Therefore it is to their immeasurable credit that the chief characteristics of the election were huge voter participation and almost complete normality at the polls. In most areas the vote was about 80 percent of the census, and practically no "incidents" occurred at the voting places. In the province of Murcia, a woman 106 years old walked to her polling place to vote, and in Castellon a bride and groom stopped in to vote on their way to the altar. The total number of those arrested, most of whom were released nearly at once, was around 40. There was not one single "victim" and no one was seriously injured.

The result of the massive turnout from the Basque province to the Canary Islands is a new bicameral government composed of a *Cámara* or *Congreso* of 350 *diputados* or representatives and a *Senado* of 248 senators, 41 appointed by the King and 207 elected. The *diputados* are elected by party or coalition slate in each province, the number of delegates determined by the population of the province. The senators are elected individually from each province, again the number determined by population. The first and major task of the new government will be to write a constitution by which the new democracy will be run.

The democratization process began less than a year ago when Juan Carlos appointed Suarez as his prime minister. Suarez quickly negotiated for a referendum, and on December 15, 1976, 94 percent of the voters said *sí* to a democratic form of government (just a year after Franco's death on November 20, 1975). Under pressure the old Franquist *Cortes* disbanded, and on April 1, 1977, the *Movimiento Nacional* was dissolved. A week later Suarez legalized the Communist party—something he reportedly promised the military he would not do. This was a calculated move that removed the Communists from the flattering shadows of clandestinity and placed them squarely in the noonday reality of emerging Spanish politics. On May 24 the campaign began: three weeks and a day of rest later, Spain celebrated its first general elections in our time.

Juan Carlos and his prime minister were the designers of the whole process. The young and able monarch is immensely popular, partly because of a studied campaign of excursions into the provinces with his equally attractive and popular queen, Sofia. He has become the democratic hero and major political interpreter of his country. That Juan Carlos, chosen and groomed as Franco's royal successor, and Suarez, once secretary of the *Movimiento Nacional*, should bring Spain so far so quickly, is a tribute to their leadership as well as a measure of Franco's anachronistic ingenuousness.

As the campaign progressed and the myriad parties coalesced, dropped out and variously lost and gained momentum, it became clear that, apart from regional considerations, the Spanish people would vote for four major parties and coalitions. On the right was *Alianza Popular*, essentially a neo-Franquist group led by Manuel Fraga Iribarne, long a "liberal" minister in the previous regime, but now a beleaguered and entrenched leftover who steadily lost ground.

In the center, *Unión de Centro Democrático* was made up of moderate parties that coalesced around the quasi-official candidacy of Suarez. The platform was monarchist, anti-Marxist and family-oriented without a strictly Catholic bias, openly espousing religious freedom. The UCD was expected to win the largest vote, and did so.

Clearly to the left of center, and under the dynamic leadership of Felipe González, a young socialist lawyer from Seville, the *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (Spanish Socialist Workers' Party) represented the clearest threat to Suarez's plurality. González's threat was based more on his personal energy as a campaigner and his attractiveness as a candidate than on specific issues. González scored points for his openness and honesty, and his appeal for family unity and the importance of the *pueblo*, the people. Thousands of striking posters of González's portrait and the PSOE's symbol—a fist holding a red nose—plastered the walls of virtually every town in Spain, and González personally campaigned in all the provinces.

On the left, along with many splinter groups, was the *Partido Comunista Español*, doing its best to gain respectability and to associate itself with Eurocommunism. Communist leader Santiago Carrillo lacks personal magnetism, but many actors and popular singers campaigned energetically for the PCE. The only unique element in the Communists' campaign was their plank for women's liberation, including divorce, abortion and

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A Personal Reflection

Ten years ago when I was a newspaper correspondent stationed in Madrid, Generalissimo Franco and his associates were congratulating themselves on having assured the eternal perpetuation of Francoism in Spain. Some months earlier, the nation had "approved" in a "yes" or "no" referendum Franco's new succession law that, in effect, provided for a fascist monarchy. According to the regime, 90-odd percent of the voters had said "yes," and one had to take their word for it.

On June 15 this year, Spaniards did precisely the opposite of what they supposedly said they wanted 10 years ago. Under the aegis of King Juan Carlos I (whom Franco had naively chosen in 1969 to be his successor as chief of state), nearly 18 million of them, roughly half the population, trooped to the polls to elect freely a parliament and thus officially write "finis" on the 40 years of the Franco era. Although Juan Carlos had sworn allegiance to the "principles" of Franco's National Movement, and convinced a great many people that he would uphold the old system, he moved within hours of his coronation to wide-ranging democratic reforms. That the elections could be held was his triumph.

The "Democratic Center Union" (UCD) of Premier Adolfo Suarez, which actually is to the right of the center, won the most seats in both the *cortes*, the Spanish parliament, and the senate, in part because of jerrymandering. Districts in the traditionally conservative rural areas were given representation equal to that of the districts in the heavily populated and more politically progressive big cities. Even so, the UCD had a genuine voter plurality in Madrid.

The left, to the extent that it is possible to speak of the Spanish left as a unified concept, also did extremely well in popular vote, although this was not reflected in the distribution of seats in the *cortes*. The big runner up was the Spanish Socialist Workers party (PSOE), which received nearly five million votes to the UCD's slightly over six million. Had Felipe Gonzáles, the youthful head of the PSOE, not excluded the rival Socialist group, the traditional and intellectually oriented Socialist Popular party (PSP), the Socialist coalition would have rolled up just 300,000 votes less than the government party. And if one cared to add the nearly 1.6-million votes garnered by the Communist party (legalized two months before the elections), which came in third nationally, the "left" would have been the victor—at least on paper.

The Spanish left, at least for now, is quite moderate even by European standards. The PSOE Socialists are quintessential Western European democratic socialists. They had the support of such international luminaries of this fraternity as West Germany's Willy Brandt, Sweden's Olof Palme and Portugal's Prime Minister Mario Soares. The Popular Socialists led by Professor Enrique Tierno-Galvan, one of the most respected men in Spain, is somewhat more ideological than the PSOE. But both groups are more centrist in nature than, say, the French Socialist party, which studiously avoided supporting their fellow Socialists across the Pyrenees.

The Communist party, which will have 20 deputies in the 350-seat parliament, is the standard bearer of "Eurocommunism" and the moderation this movement is said to represent. Santiago Carrillo, its secretary-general, is more anti-Soviet than France's Georges Marchais and Italy's Enrico Berlinguer, which became something of an embarrassment for the latter two when they held a "Eurocommunist summit" in Madrid during the spring. Dolores Ibarruri, the legendary octogenarian "La Pasionaria" and president of the Spanish Communist party, chose to abstain from public speeches after her recent return from Moscow rather than denounce the Soviet Union as Santiago Carrillo had wanted her to do.

The Communist party did not offer a clear program, certainly not a revolutionary one. The Communists did not even push for the closing of United States military bases in Spain (the Socialists appear to feel stronger about it). They do not oppose Spain's membership in NATO or the European Economic Community. They oppose terrorism and they have been sending telegrams of condolence to the police, still a rather brutal organization in Spain, whenever a cop is killed by extreme leftists or Basque separatist terrorists. The size of the Communist vote could be misleading. One foreign

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birth control.

All the major parties campaigned on the same issues: inflation (which is said to be near 30 percent); unemployment (nearing a million); democracy and liberty (the slogan of the Communists was "To vote Communist is to vote for democracy," and that of the Socialists was "Liberty is in your hands"); national reconciliation; the right to vote for any party; the necessity to vote; and an end to terrorism. Finally, there is regionalism—historically and presently a thorny problem in the Canary Islands, Andalusia, Galicia and Catalonia, and an inpending crisis in the Basque provinces. All the parties except the *Alianza Popular* made appeals to regionalist sentiments. Although the parties promised solutions to these and other problems, none (with the partial exception of *Alianza Popular*, the only party with a well-defined platform) offered much in the way of concrete details. Undoubtedly lack of experience and the suddenness of the campaign prevented the formation of exact platforms. But for whatever reason, the thrust of all the campaigns was rhetorical and not practical.

The most impressive aspect of the election campaign was the absolute openness, from far right to far left, the *sense* at least of a completely democratic spectrum. This full spectrum appears to be a *sine qua non* for Spanish democracy. Everyone from the monarchy to the workers and *campesinos* insists upon it.

As in most smoothly functioning democracies, there was nothing unusual or surprising about the election

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observer suggested that many Spaniards voted Communist only because they couldn't pass up the first chance to taste the forbidden fruit.

The principal victims of the election were the residues of the Franco establishment and the extreme right. *Alianza Popular* (AP), a party hammered together by Manuel Fraga Iribarne, who was Franco's information minister and a deputy premier in the first royal government, got only 8.26 percent of the popular vote and only 17 seats, less than the Communists, and less than anyone had expected. Young Falange members have veered from their historical Fascism to the extreme left. *Fuerza Neuva* ("The New Force"), a frankly reactionary group, was unable to gain even a single seat in parliament.

The June elections were only the first step in liberalizing and modernizing the country Franco left behind. The opposition believes that new elections should be held after the *Cortes* drafts a new constitution to replace the maze of repressive "fundamental laws" inherited from Franco. Suarez, however, intends to remain as prime minister, even heading a minority government (the UCD fell 11 seats short of an absolute majority in parliament), for the next four years. The King named him last year to a five-year premiership, and Suarez believes that until 1981, he is responsible to Juan Carlos and not to parliament.

As soon as the euphoria of the first democratic elections in 41 years wears off (friends in Madrid tell me it is already wearing off), rivalries and power clashes are inevitable as in any democracy. The Socialists, who will not consider a coalition with Suarez's UCD, can prevent the government party from obtaining a two-thirds majority for any legislation they may dislike.

Suarez's party is full of ex-Francoist figures who still have powerful economic interests to defend. The Spanish economy still runs on 19th-century capitalist oligarchic principles. Powerful banks own much of the industry, and much of what they do not own is in the hands of the state. Because the government is an economic power in its own right, Suarez has the weapon of patronage. All this may not go down well with the liberal or Socialist opposition to say nothing of the labor unions.

The government must take a position on the intractable problem of Basque and Catalonian autonomy demands. Basque nationalists and the police cannot go on indefinitely killing each other, as they have for several years. But is the King prepared to promulgate the equivalent of devolution acts for these two regions? One of Franco's most firmly held convictions was that no regional autonomies can be tolerated, which was one reason why much anti-Franco sentiment had originated for decades in the Basque and Catalonian provinces.

Nobody in Spain has the stomach for any throwbacks to the Franco era. That the succession law would not survive a moment longer than Franco himself became obvious even before the Generalissimo could be laid to rest in November 1975. Only the entrenched *ancien régime* bureaucracy, in its ignorance of history, refused to believe it. With Franco's death, the spell of dictatorship was instantly broken. It took no great genius to realize that the social and political dynamics of Spain would tolerate nothing less than the implantation of democracy. In a long private conversation last October, Suarez told me that he would not stand still for political sabotage from the extreme right and the Franco nostalgists. The army, he said, was loyal to the King, and would suppress any antidemocratic adventures.

Studying the Spanish election returns, I was reminded of a book I read recently. Written by Franco's cousin and head of his military household, the late Lieutenant General Francisco Franco Salgado-Araujo, the book was titled, *My Private Conversations with Franco*, and it was chock full of predictions that Spain could never survive as a Western representative democracy and that any attempt to establish one would lead to a new civil war.

Franco, it turns out, had a triple obsession: Liberalism, Communism and Freemasonery. All of them, he was convinced until the day he died, were conspiring against the purity of Spain. After the succession law was approved in the referendum 10 years ago, Franco said that now he could die in peace because he had provided for the safe future of Spain. In an ironic fashion, Franco, indeed, opened the door to a new Spanish future. The revulsion against his dictatorship proved to be infinitely stronger than his hackneyed succession law.

Even after 40 years, a dictator does not understand his own nation. Men like Brezhnev and Tito may wish to ponder this.

Tad Szulc

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results. If everything stands out, it is the weak showing of the right: *Alianza Popular* limped in behind the Communists with less than five percent of the *diputados*. This was no triumph for the Communists who only took a shade over five percent. But it was an unqualified *fracaso* for the Franquist past. Predictably the center achieved a near majority, just shy of 50 percent of the *diputados*. Together with the senators appointed by the King, they will enjoy a very weighty share of the *Senado*. If anyone triumphed it was the Socialists, with an impressive third of the *diputados*. The center claimed it would form a government and run the show *solo*, but it is quite clear that Felipe González is not going to go away, keep quiet, or let the center run away with anything.

In the long run, or even in the short run, the real triumph belongs to the people of Spain, all of the people, not one or another, or one over another, but all the Spains, Castile and Catalonia, the Basques and the Andalusians, the new democrats of one Spain, plural and synergetic at once.

Our own democracy supported the Franco government. In the process we lent credence, tacitly or overtly, to Franco's dream and lie that Spain was incapable of becoming a democracy. But Spain has just become a democracy. The ugly cliche that Spain is a nation of such individualists that it requires the heavy hand of a dictator can no longer be repeated. In truth, democracy is the obvious and perhaps unique solution to such individualism.

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Stanley Kauffmann on films

Senses and Nonsenses

In the Realm of the Senses (Argos-Oshima). This Japanese film, which has run through some US censorship troubles, was written and directed by Nagisa Oshima. Now 45, Oshima has been making films since 1959 and for some time has been known as the most radical director in Japan, radical in style and subject. The only previous Oshima film I've seen is *Boy,* which he derived from a newspaper story about a family that trained their ten-year-old son to fake injuries by cars in order to collect damages. I remember some lovely shots (the boy in the snow) and some arty strain.

Now Oshima has derived another film from a newspaper story—of 1936—about a prostitute who, after a long ecstatic love affair with a pimp, amputated his organ. She was found four days later wandering around in a happy daze holding the severed member. The story is that she achieved a semi-legendary status and became popular again in her trade. (No explanation of why she escaped a criminal charge.)

The intent, as the title indicates, is to submerge us in a sea of sensuality. Two professionals of sex are surprised, after their extensive experience, by the intensity of their response to each other. They move, almost transcendentally, to the utmost limits of physical experience, until he wants to die, in the literal as well as Elizabethan meaning, and she seals off their union at its height, so to speak, by severing his penis (with his dreamy consent).

Oshima has selected two attractive people. Eiko Matsuda is a woman with some charm as well as a nice body; Tatsuya Fiji is lithe and—early, anyway—humorous. But the idea of the film exists in one place, figuratively, the film in another, and there is a great gap between. First, it's full of heavy symbolism. Example: when the man first meets the woman, she is quarreling with another woman and has a knife in her hand; he laughs and says she should have something else in her hand. Second, the color photography is of the most blatantly Beautiful kind—dime-store shades of red and gold, unsubtle contrasts—and the compositions could not be more corny: figures arranged symmetrically against sunset skies, figures arranged carefully so that falling light just catches them, and so on. Third, because of our constant awareness of various contrivances, we never do sink into the sea: we watch. And merely to watch a series of sexual encounters in an allegedly serious film soon gets as dull as watching such encounters in unpretentious porn.

Far from being any kind of love story, as the two characters claim, and as some outside the picture have claimed, *Realm* registers only as the record of physiological coincidence: a woman of insatiable appetite meets a man of indefatigable potency. The fancy décor, the geisha trimmings, the cinematic attitudinizing don't elevate it beyond a demonstration of stamina that finally reaches the pathological.

And that last prolonged moment of amputation is unwatchable. (I've tried twice.) The self-mutilation in Ferreri's *The Last Woman* was horrible enough, but at least it was preceded by a film of some purpose that built to a shocking rational-irrational act (*TNR,* June 19, '76). *Realm* has been only in the realm of the clinical for some time before the finish, varnished with the glibly poetical. So here the amputation is not only sickening, it's sententious!

This film has been shown in a number of places here and abroad, including festivals, and given the contents of the picture and its patina, at least some of the reviews could be predicted. Sex acts of all kinds are very explicit—for instance, his eating of food she has inserted in her vagina; semen dribbling from her mouth after fellatio—so there were certain to be at least some critics who would call the film poetic, a work of erotic art. There is always a fashionable cant. In 1877 a play that, after the proper contextual preparation, showed the heroine choosing death before dishonor would have been hailed for its purity. In 1977 a film that, after proper contextual preparation, shows a penis entering various orifices is bound to be hailed for its purity.

These days we are all so anxious not to be thought censorious that we sometimes respond to physical display as patly as a censor, except in reverse. As for intoxication by sensuality, there is more for me in Visconti's *Senso* (1953), in which we once see a woman's shoulders bared, than in all of Oshima's pubic hair. *Realm* is *at best* a sentimentally fallacious film, an Oriental *Elvira Madigan* undressed, exalted for some by its close-ups of screwing.

We're Not the Jet Set (Reade). Robert Duvall, the talented actor, is also a director of some talent—in documentary, anyway. When he was on location for a film in Nebraska some years ago (I'm told), he met the big Peterson family on their 12,000 acre farm, decided to make a film of their lives, and returned from time to time as he could, over a considerable period, until it was done. It was finished in 1974, recently had its first New York showing at the adventurous Film Forum, and is now in general release.

B. A. Peterson is a good-looking, white-haired giant. He, his wife, six sons, and two daughters live on their immense farm, but they live as much like ranchers as farmers, with their horses, their beef cattle, their rodeo interests. (At the end they're off to Asia on a rodeo tour.) The Petersons had one son, then

Films Worth Seeing

Annie Hall. Woody Allen's best film so far—which means mostly unobtrusive direction, mostly successful gags about neurotic sex and love.

Effi Briest. R. W. Fassbinder's lovely film rendition of Fontane's 19th-century novel about a German bourgeois girl-bride.

Harlan County, USA. Barbara Kopple's fine documentary about coal miners today. At last, a really merited Academy Award.

We All Loved Each Other So Much. Italian male bonding. Three friends after WWII. Some hokum, considerable sentimental fun.

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12 years of nothing, then seven more children, so one child is a grown man and some children are quite small. They roust around, eat, fight, tease, work, and live a generally zippy though far from cloudless life. Money is tight. Some of the boys want to get out of farming. One of them wants to be a rodeo clown. (We see his debut.) Fights and all, they seem fairly fond of one another and where not fond, at least appreciative. It's a portrait of what is certainly a family.

The color photography is generally pallid, but the editing is generally good (including some weaving of time-strands—showing the result of an accident as we see it coming), but what really distinguishes the picture is Duvall's affinity and concern. He is never seen, but we feel his keenness about the Petersons' lives as he pokes into everything: high-school graduation, cattle sale, the bathing of a muddied boy, B. A. snoring on the sofa, conversation with B. A.'s father—an antiqued version of himself—sitting in a plowed field. This isn't Norman Rockwell stuff, the talk is unlaundered of obscenity and prejudice. Whether we would like the Petersons (I do) or share their standards (I don't) is irrelevant to the prime fact: Duvall has fixed affectionately a segment of robust contemporary life.

Two points. I'm curious about the one son who is completely passed over, Rex, who likes the indoors more than the outdoors and likes to cook. ("He'd make someone a nice wife," says his father.) What about him? And—yet again—we see the contrast between magnificent landscapes and ugly towns. Men may have prehistorically got their esthetic concepts from nature, but the lesson has dimmed.

(Note: The title comes from a country-music number played on the soundtrack.)

A Bridge Too Far (United Artists). This is Joseph E. Levine's (reported) $25 million epic about Operation Market Garden: the military maneuver, planned by Montgomery and approved by Eisenhower, in which, in late 1944, 35,000 British and American paratroops dropped behind German lines in eastern Holland to capture six bridges while British ground troops drove up from Belgium. It was a daredevil plan in any event, and bad intelligence killed it, as well as many thousands of soldiers and civilians.

The picture is well photographed by Geoffrey Unsworth, smartly edited by Anthony Gibbs, and adequately directed by Richard Attenborough. Amidst the cluster of stars in smallish parts are Robert Redford (good), Sean Connery (dull), and Ryan O'Neal (ridiculous). A picture of conventional length on this subject might have scored some conventional ironies. But why did anyone think that a film about a failed WWII operation, without any novelty of information or deepening of history or even differently spectacular action, should run five minutes less than three hours? A Film Too Long.

I Believe In This

A Letter from Roberto Rossellini

Early in June, less than a month after his 71st birthday, the distinguished Italian film director, Roberto Rossellini, died suddenly at his residence in Rome, apparently of a heart attack. The sad news of his passing prompted me to draw out and reread a nine-page letter he wrote to me in 1972. It provides a partial testament concerning the sweeping "harvest of knowledge" that concerned him totally in his later years.

I first met Rossellini in New York in the early '70s. I was working in the humanities program of a private foundation, and he had come to America seeking advice and support for a film on the American Revolution. Trained as an historian of early America, and already dismayed by the vacuity of bicentennial projects then pending, I responded eagerly to his vision of the Revolution as "perhaps the only true social-political revolution achieved by man since the time of Babylon." We debated and discussed the topic with relish, Rossellini confiding at one point, "Jeffer-

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son is my hero." As we talked, I had little hope that the overseers of America's philanthropic wealth in New York and Washington would ever entrust the story of our country's only revolution, of late and blessed memory, to this foreign director. And of course, much to our loss, they never did.

But Rossellini and I remained in touch, a contact that was as gratifying for me as it was improbable. This renowned director was already in his middle 60s; I was nearly 40 years his junior. Moreover, I had no apparent practical aptitude for film-making, and I had never even seen his famous early work, *Open City*. (He related stories to me of his own wartime hardships in Rome, where at times people had been reduced through hunger to eating grass.) Nor did our visions of history and art coincide; he was more committed to the idealization of European culture, to the veneration of "great men," to the creation of exact and costly productions than I could be.

Still, several elements seemed to aid our unlikely friendship. We were both from highly idealistic and rational backgrounds; his father was an architect, mine a doctor. So we were able to talk at length about the science films he was then creating in Houston, about his admiration for scientists and his dismay over their heedless and specialized ways. And we were each positive and idealistic teachers, clearly "born under the same sign," no matter how great the difference in the distances we had travelled. But our strongest bond was more unusual: we both shared, for different reasons, a deep faith in the possibility of *conveying ideas in visual form.*

When I first saw Rossellini's *The Rise of Louis XIV*, more than a decade ago, I was struck that he had succeeded, at least for this historian, in creating a visual argument, a coherent interpretation of the court at Versailles, that was more logical and compelling—not to mention more pleasing—than any article written on the subject. Later, when I encountered the director, it was not surprising to learn that he had quietly renounced the world of movie-theater entertainment altogether. He had few material resources and no extensive formal education to guide or constrain him, only his compelling sense that the most powerful ideas, the most burning questions, the most vital information, can be made coherent, visible, readily accessible. With the aid of his son Renzo and others, he had conceived and was producing a long series of dramatic and educational biographical portraits for Italian television: Socrates and St. Augustine, Diderot and Daguerre. I remember Rossellini telling me, as we walked along 73rd Street after watching a screening of his film on Blaise Pascal, that he had undertaken a study of Descartes because a skeptic had told him that "No one could make an interesting movie about Descartes."

In his vigorous last years Rossellini had a telling sense for where true "interest" lay that set him apart from less bold cultural commentators and did not rest easily with the intellectually cautious American media industry. His film interview with Salvadore Allende shortly before Allende's death (in which the Chilean President spoke of the political inspiration he drew from Abraham Lincoln) has not, to my knowledge, ever been translated into English. I wonder whether the dramatization of Karl Marx, on which Rossellini was still working at the time of his own death, will ever be aired in the United States.

Always an optimist, he himself surely felt it would be widely seen and that his own unending questions would again be shared with others. That was all he asked for his simple but sweeping efforts. For as he wrote in an expansive letter of July 20, 1972, from Italy (shortened here for publication) "action is [almost] all. . . . Even though a work be imperfect, it is always better than nothing."

Peter H. Wood

Rome, Italy.
Vieolo delle Sette
Chiese, 8.

Dear Dr. Wood,

Your letter of June 12th was forwarded to Rome, and has caught up with me here in Fiesole. I'm very actively working on the science programs, in addition to the two films I am shooting here; one on Leon Battista Alberti, and another on Cosimo de Medici. I do not have the treatment of The American Revolution here with me, but I shall forward it to you.

However meanwhile in this letter, perhaps I can explain the substance of my ideas, and explain where they fit into the general scheme of my programs. Let me begin with this point: I believe we men are advancing at breakneck speed toward the time when we will have to constantly reshape the habits, behavior and instincts we have developed over the course of our history. Man's knowledge is expanding at a giddy speed, and to keep up with it, individuals must multiply their present capabilities. Only new methods of education and communication can help us achieve this. And that is what I am trying to do. I have abandoned commercial, traditional cinema, and have dedicated myself to developing new educational methods through the use of visual images.

When progress was slow, when new ideas and discoveries appeared in moments greatly separated in time, educational methods rooted in the past did little harm. The fact is, we needed many centuries, many thousands of years to complete our first revolution: that of articulating (after mentally perceiving, examining and cataloguing) a language which communicates. Language gave a new and powerful impetus to our intellectual faculties.

Since then, revolutionary periods have taken place at an ever more accelerated tempo. The homo sapiens, after some thousands of years, reached the agricultural revolution. Then, in briefer and briefer time spans—always gaining more awareness—he advanced to other upheavals which shattered his past and pushed him, with increasing speed, toward the future.

Where are we heading now? Are we ready to confront the problems in the vast future which awaits us? No, we are not ready. All the bewilderment in the world today proves this.

Bacon, using the experimental method, contributed to scientific development, and also to the formation of a society of specialists. And through specialization, we have accumulated enormous knowledge, scattered here and there like sheaves of wheat which we cannot gather up in a harvest of knowledge.

Now I shall tell you what I am trying to do toward exactly this end. I know that you Anglo-Saxons raise your eyebrows at those of us Latins who always speak in generalities. And you are right, in part. I have learned from you that action is (almost) all. So I shall tell you what I have done up to now, and what I plan to do. I'll explain why I have chosen the visual image as a means of education.

As I've told you, I have spent my professional life as a film

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producer/director. And I have learned that visual images are a most efficient means of saying something—and having it remembered. Comenius, the great 17th century Moravian pedagogue, said teaching is the queen of the arts, and the teaching method is as necessary as maps are to navigators. But he admitted the inefficiency of the (then) available methods, because one could not teach with direct, visual images, but only through discourses which often became long and obscure. For "direct vision," Comenius used the word "autopsy" in its original meaning (which lasted until the end of the 18th century): "to see with one's own eyes."

Having established this point, I asked myself which images one should propose. Even those who are not professionals in film and television know the difference between the images of what are called "documentary" films; and those of the entertainment film. "Documentary" images often fail to arouse the spectator's interest, perhaps because they are too basically demonstrative, because they too clearly are didactic and informative.

An educational method must be attractive. Visual images have accustomed us to expect entertainment. So images used for education must have the appeal of the entertainment film, yet maintain the rigor of the documentary. But if they are to be truly effective, one more thing must be kept in mind. I do not know if you are familiar with Dr. Omar Moore's work with children. Well, besides traditional findings, he has identified a third basic impulse, in addition to the two elementary ones we already know: desire and fear. The third impulse is: pretending to know.

And think how true this is. We can observe it every day of our life. It is the major obstacle whenever one tries to establish a dialogue or convey information. So one must take this into account and invent a way that makes the didactic element seem a nod between "those who know." The films I have made (and those I have been making ever since I was seized by the mania to create educational information) do take this into account. I show the customs, prejudices, fears, aspirations, ideas and agonies of an epoch and a place. I show a man—an innovator—confront these. I always avoid the temptation to exalt this personality; I limit myself to observing him. Confronting a man with his age gives me enough material to construct action and incite curiosity. Shakespeare said, "Action is eloquence. The eyes of the ignorant are more learned than their ears."

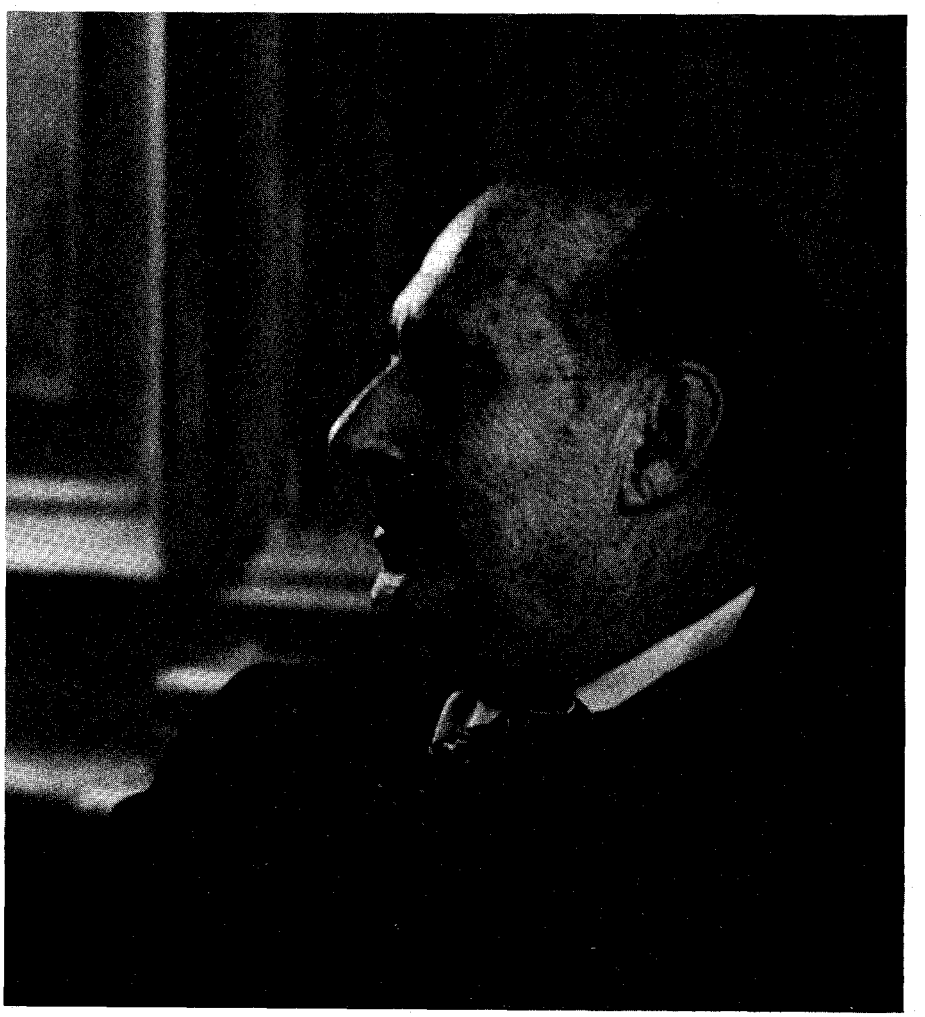
Following these concepts, I have produced programs destined primarily for television. When all of these programs are in release, I believe I will have completed a work which, in its entirety, will give a cultural orientation, in a general way, to vast masses of the public. From my point of view, each of these programs is complementary to the others. The entire body of work should serve to trace a good part of the history of human progress.

As we know, from the origins of human life, men have been regulated by two main inclinations: that of Prometheus and that of Orpheus; the techno-scientific and the artistic; the constructive and the expressive. And these have taken different roads toward the same goal: truth. The SCIENCE series I am producing is just a statement of what we know. Science, which defines our time, appears ever more mysterious and menacing. Perhaps if we understand it, we will no longer fear it.

All that I have written here may seem presumptuous. And perhaps it is. But I believe that we men of today have an enormous need to orient ourselves in the new reality we have discovered. Even though a work be imperfect, it is always better than nothing.

If one thinks for a moment of the enormous investment of money made, after the scholastic age, in improving "taste" (the museums, exhibits, concerts, art academies, etc.) and then of the little—the very little—spent (outside the professions) to realize a return from the enormous capital of intelligence of men, one is astonished. I do not have money, and therefore, with the help of some few friends, I invest all my talents and capabilities in this direction. Unfortunately, we know that it is considered a poor investment to spend money on improving the quality of men. Without doubt, men can be with or without culture; yet culture, like economy, forms a basic part of any human society.

In the near future, it is possible that other phenomenal changes will occur more frequently, on a larger scale, and in ever briefer periods of time. We need to be ready to face these changes, and their new implications. That is why every



Roberto Rossellini at the AFI Center for Advanced Film Studies in November 1970. Courtesy of the AFI Stills Collection.

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investment made in spreading knowledge, through visual and audio means, would be excellent. One could then plan a rhythm of production and distribution adequate to the goal of "permanent education," which has been discussed for so long, but which has never been confronted or resolved.

I believe we can resolve the problems of the future which are dizzily speeding toward us only if we learn how to multiply man's capacities, how to crush specialization, and how to acquire vast knowledge. I believe in this.

Roberto Rossellini

Peter H. Wood is professor of history at Duke, and the author of *Black Majority* (Knopf).

Books Considered

Shattered Peace: The Origins of the Cold War and the National Security State by Daniel Yergin

(Houghton Mifflin; $15)

In the long inquiry into the origins of the Cold War which has engaged so many American scholars attention has more and more focused on George Kennan's Long Telegram of February 22, 1946 as a kind of Rosetta stone, illuminating all that was to come later.

The Long Telegram was a document of about 5500 words (not 8000 as Kennan remembered in his Memoirs) in which Kennan laid down the philosophical principles of a tough policy toward the postwar Soviet Union.

It was possibly the longest telegram up to that date to be dispatched by a foreign service officer and there is no question but that it had a resounding effect. Circulated widely throughout the government, the military, the foreign service and in influential non-governmental quarters the Long Telegram convinced many that their instinct that the Soviet Union was an implacable enemy was well grounded. Kennan's famous "Mr. X" article in *Foreign Affairs* (July 1947) might well be called "Son of the Long Telegram"; it elaborated the same essential thesis which we know today as "containment."

Because the arguments of the Long Telegram came to be repeated again and again as the rationale for the Cold War the circumstances of its composition have been carefully studied, particularly by the painstaking Daniel Yergin who has made in *Shattered Peace* the most comprehensive examination of the *American* side of the US-Soviet schism yet attempted.

Yergin sets Kennan's mood as he drafts the telegram in his flat at the American Embassy on Mokhovaya Street in Moscow—"cold, fever, sinus, toothache." Yergin describes Kennan's mood as "ulcerous," particularly toward US officials still attempting to negotiate their way through troubles with the Soviet Union.

We see the suffering Kennan, nerves raw, tooth aching, throat sore, working out his venom in a policy document which will color the lives of hundreds of millions of people for years and set the limits of American policy for decades.

It is a fearsome picture, an example of the manner in which personality, moods, illness can affect the perceptions of a diplomat, a statesman, a public official. Nor, it may seem, can there be any doubt of Yergin's portrait. He draws it almost word for word from the *Memoirs* in which Kennan himself speaks of the *douleurs* listed by Yergin.

The stage setting is perfect. What better could illuminate the dark and dreary origins of the Cold War? There is only one problem and here George Kennan himself is surely at fault. The plain and inelegant truth known by all who have ever worked with George Kennan is that it was all a charade. *Whenever* he had an important piece of work to do; *whenever* he had a Long Telegram or an "X" article to write; *whenever* he wished to think through a complicated problem—he went to bed. It was his way of escaping the trivia which mercilessly consume the time and energy of the foreign service officer. It was a trick he learned early in his career and relied upon to the end of his diplomatic days. The story was always the same. He had a terrible cold, flu, the grippe, a sore throat. He was not to be interrupted. In the luxury of a few days confined to his room he got on with the task at hand. It is no wonder that Kennan's dispatches over the years were the marvel of the Foreign Service. Not only does he possess a rare and genuinely analytic mind, a true gift of literary craftsmanship, but he is deadly serious about what he thinks and how he expresses it. This is the key to the Long Telegram, not the cover story in which he himself connived.

The point is not a small one. Kennan's thinking did provide a philosophy for much Cold War diplomacy. But it was not the product of a Moscow winter's mood. It was the insight of a remarkably sensitive man, thoroughly grounded in Russian mores and culture, strongly non-ideological or idiosyncratic by nature, probably more influenced than he realized by *ancien régime* psychology and possessed of an almost mystical sense of his special role as a catalyst of Russian-American relations.

More and more in the works of "revisionist" American historians Kennan emerges as the *eminence gris* of the Cold War. Every scrap of evidence about him (like his colds and grippes) is examined for light it may cast upon the so-called puzzle. Of course the contradictions and the inconsistencies exist. They exist in any man's writing or thinking unless he is an ideologue of a very primitive order. Consistency is, indeed, the hobgoblin of small minds and Kennan's is no small mind.

The trouble with Yergin's book and with all the hunts for the Rosetta stone of the Cold War is simply that the problem is wrongly stated. This is exquisitely demonstrated by Yergin's exhaustive research. The mind boggles and the back aches at the endless lists of sources—the J. Anthony Panuch papers, the Walter S. Salant papers, the Arnold Wolfers papers, the Harry S. Truman papers: Central files; the Harry S. Truman papers: Confidential files; the Harry S. Truman papers: Official files;

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the Harry S. Truman papers: the President's secretary's file; the interviews: Frank Altschul, Bernard Brodie, George Elsey, Elting Morison and dozens more; the oral histories too numerous to list; the unpublished diaries (Eben Ayers's Walter Brown's, James Pollock's etc.); boxes and boxes and boxes; filing cabinet after filing cabinet; cassettes enough to make the ears ring.

What does it all show? It shows that many men, a whole generation of men, swung into the Cold War psyche. Some led, some followed. Some lagged, some hastened. But finding key figures, a lost archstone, a single document that illumines the whole is not possible. We end up where we have been. We know that policy changed with Roosevelt's death. We know there had been signs of change before that death. We know it swung hard right under Truman. We know what Churchill did and the effect of his Iron Curtain speech (greater, I suspect, than Yergin indicates). We know what Truman thought and Byrnes thought and Stimson thought and what Kennan, of course, and the other trained professionals whom Yergin calls the Riga group—that is the small band of Kennan, Bohlen and others trained at Riga before Roosevelt and Litvinov agreed on recognition—thought. We know the professionals were appalled by FDR's casual, high-style politicking carried out in the name of diplomacy. (Yergin calls this the "Yalta school," a convenient term but he has to stretch to get all the non-pros under its umbrella).

But in a sense it is a case of the more we know the less we know. Too many cooks. Too much input.

There are those who might say—well, the story would be different if we knew the Russian side. And that, to be certain, is the ground on which Yergin's study most conveniently can be faulted. He does not have the Soviet side. He has a few ingredients but not even as many as are available. He has our perceptions of what Stalin was up to in the closing days of the war and the first years thereafter. He has some clues that indicate that these perceptions were wrong. Badly wrong. But he does not have nor does anyone at this point have the real view inside the Kremlin. He does not know to what extent Soviet perceptions and Stalinist decisions were influenced by misconceptions of American policy and action, nor, more importantly, the extent to which they were influenced by inner Soviet politics.

Yergin marries his Cold War analysis of Riga versus Yalta to a concept which he calls the "National Security State" which might otherwise be called an extended balance of power ideology in which the whole world is seen as an arena in which each microscopic change benefits either the USA or the Soviet Union, total division, total balance. It is a conceptualization very useful for Defense budget lobbyists: not very useful in the real world.

The wisest assumption that anyone can make about foreign policy has always been that it is an extension of domestic policy by other means. One can fairly fault the Riga group for believing that Soviet foreign policy was different, that it was motivated by Marxian goals for world revolution rather than old fashioned Russian imperialism. To take this view one had to write off almost all of Soviet foreign policy since Lenin's coup in 1917, *i.e.*, letting the German and Hungarian revolutions after World War I go down the drain; Soviet military collaboration with the Weimar Republic; Stalin's ditching of the German Communists with the victory of Hitler; Stalin's ditching of the Chinese Communists; his consistent collaboration with Chiang Kai-shek; his systematic killing off of foreign Communist leaders who had the misfortune to be in the USSR; his adherence to Czarist foreign policy goals—warm water ports, Consantinople, the Balkan glaciers, Iran, Manchuria—the record is so long it is difficult to see how it escaped the dullest mind. But it did.

How could anyone who had seen the devastation of Russia at the end of World War II seriously suppose that the Soviet Union could now mount an aggressive attack upon anyone? Frankly the only way such an intention could be made credible was through a factor which seems too subtle to find recognition in so over-sourced a book as Yergin's. It arose from consistent and total *grubost*, a Russian word which means, all in itself, gross, coarse, rude, boorish, crude, ill-mannered, callous, barbarous, blunt and churlish.

There is simply no other way of characterizing the conduct of Soviet foreign policy from, say, 1944 onward, not to say that this trait had not already been present.

One may argue that individuals do not make a difference in the conduct of foreign affairs. This, indeed, is a Marxist assumption. But with the changing of the guard in the Soviet Foreign office, on the eve of World War II, the entrance of Molotov, the introduction in a far more important role than is yet widely understood of the police apparatus, the shelving of veterans like Maxim Litivinov and Ivan Maisky, Soviet foreign relations acquired precisely that quality of *grubost* mentioned above.

In assessing blame for the Cold War one may give great weight to the "American Century" advocates like Henry Luce. Or the implacable anti-Soviet influence of Admiral Leahy in the White House and James Forrestal in the Pentagon. Or to the domestic harassments of Truman, Byrnes and Acheson. One can condemn the churlishness with which the US cut off lend-lease to Soviet Russia (but only if we acknowledge that UNRRA aid helped the Soviets through a bitter and partially self-imposed famine in 1946-47). One can inveigh against the childish deceits of Stalin and Truman at Potsdam (Truman minimizing the A-bomb; Stalin minimizing Japan's hysteric efforts to make peace).

And still one comes back to *grubost*. It

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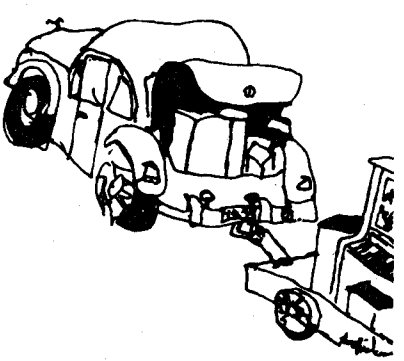

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did set the tone.

In fact there is no Rosetta stone. The origins of the Cold War lie not in some nasty plot by Americans and not in some "operational code" of communism. They lie in the natural divergency of view and interest of two world powers. They had been artificially cemented by war and a common danger. With the end of war their ways parted. They were bound to part. Their interests were bound to collide. The wonder is not that this happened. The wonder is that anyone was surprised that it did happen.

It is a lesson which should be carefully pondered as in the post-Kissinger era the US and the USSR begin to pick their way toward a more realistic understanding of their inevitably difficult relationship.

Yergin has given us an invaluable résumé of the positions and views of the American players on the foreign policy stage during the period in which the Cold War emerged. He has counted and labelled almost every tree in the forest. It is information which we will always find useful. What remains is to determine the genuine configuration of the forest. Only with the opening of the Soviet archives will we be able to attack that problem with any real confidence.

Harrison E. Salisbury

Harrison E. Salisbury's latest book is *Travels Around America* (Walker).

Growing Old in America by David Hackett Fischer

(Basic Books; $10.95)

At last there is a book about attitudes toward old age and how they have changed with the passage of time. We have not been very favored on this subject: information has rained down concerning the child, the family, and even death. But people did not talk about old age. This book by D. H. Fischer has the merit of opening up a little examined area and inviting us to think: even those who are not convinced by the way it states the problem will profit from reading it. The job is hard: there is no age at which a man is automatically old, and an old man today is 25 or 30 years older than his ancestor, the 40-year-old "old man" of the 17th century.

D. H. Fischer begins with the status of old people in America in the 17th and 18th centuries when they were generally revered. This is the part of the book I liked best. Everything which was attractive, powerful, or respectable had to be old, even Christ; despite his 30 years was his hair not as white as wool, or snow?

Beginning with the 19th century, the situation changes. The youth cult replaces that of age, and fear of age replaces reverence for it in an uninterrupted evolution accelerated during the last decades. In this the author recognizes part of a general movement which swept the western world after the American and French revolutions, the beginnings of modern times. Thus the author brings us through the great change of attitude which separated the 17th and 18th centuries from the 19th and 20th. The same spirit has pervaded the past two centuries. The originality of the present appears not in instinctive, spontaneous attitudes but in an increased awareness of the social problem caused by the distress and loneliness of old people and in a quest for policies to give them help and security.

After I finished reading this book, I closed my eyes and contemplated the memories of reading, of my childhood, and of my life which it had called forth. These memories suggest to me a scale of interpretation different from the author's. This is it:

First I took issue with a few given facts. How can one maintain that Cherubin's style of dress is more appropriate for a person of advanced age than is Werther's? *The Old Man and the Sea* is presented as an example of the decrepitude of old age. I did not understand it that way at the time, now quite far off, when I read it with wonderment. I saw in it rather the ingenious but futile struggle of a strong old man against the elements and an example of the intimate relationship which can develop between a child and a man old enough to be his grandfather, bypassing the adult generation. An old man who thus possesses the friendship and confidence of a child is neither devalued nor abandoned. But let us leave detailed points here. Rather than discuss them, I propose to compare to Fischer's thesis the scenario which he called forth in my imagination.

The first images went back to medieval times, long before the *terminus a quo* of "American Studies," which too often derive their society *ex nihilo*.

Here is what Octavien de Saint Gelais said in his old age; he died around 1512 at the age of 36.

J'etais frais, le cuir (la peau) tendre et poli;
Droit comme ung jonc, leger comme hirondelle,
Propre, bien mis, . . . joly
Doulx en maintien ainsi qu'une pucelle . . .
. . . Banni suis, vieillard mis en reserve
. . . *Dorenavant tiendray mon rang* a part
Aupres du feu pour eschauffer la cire,
(I was young with my skin soft and smooth;
Straight as a reed, light as a swallow
Clean, well dressed, . . . attractive
With manner as gracious as a girl . . .
Now I am banished, an old man set aside
From now on I will have my place apart
Next to the fire to melt wax,)

that is to say I will spend my time in study, writing, and devotions, sedentary jobs.

The ideal man of medieval and early modern times was neither the adolescent nor the old man, but the young adult in his full strength who could fight on the fairgrounds, win a tournament, or go to war, who spent his life traveling from place to place on horseback. He wore a short garment which, in the 15th century, molded his legs and buttocks and in the 16th exposed, as a sign of his virile strength, an enormous codpiece. As soon as he was no longer able to lead such a hard and debilitating life, he became an old man. He stayed by the fire, wore long garments, a robe rather like our modern dressing gown. Or, in the 17th century, he stopped following fashion; that is to say that in the reign of Louis XIII he dressed in the style of the late 16th century. Doubtless he retained the income from his properties, when he could administer them. This often required physical effort and travel. Iconography and literature scarcely give a brilliant picture of him. No, the myth of old age was gone, and this contrasted

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greatly to ancient times.

Simultaneously in actual practice and in ideology, a great change took place toward the middle of the 17th century. The nature of activity changed. Kings such as Philip II and Louis XIV were already sedentary bureaucrats. Physical comfort appeared; carriages had better suspension, and the roads were better maintained. In short, active life could be prolonged. The annals of the 18th century are filled with tireless, already modern old men. Thanks to the influence of the Bible and of antiquity, the old man then became a symbol of wisdom, knowledge, and moderation; a model for men of all classes, the man of Greuze. Probably this promotion of old men disturbed their heirs in places such as the south of France where custom permitted the father to bequeath goods to one of his children on the condition that he live with him. The historian of Languedoc society, Y. Castan, says that in criminal cases they always sought first in the immediate family for the guilty party. This is apparently the pattern followed in colonial America as Fischer describes it. I believe, however, that this aggressiveness must have diminished in the 18th century, at least in the middle class and in the towns, thanks to increased family feelings and the affection generated within the nuclear family. This is why a respect for the aged could develop at the same time as attention to and advancement of the child. The parallelism between attitudes toward age and childhood is as remarkable as it is mysterious: indifference in medieval and early modern times, attention and interest in the 18th and 19th centuries.

However we must remember the respectability of the old man in general portrayals and in ideology was linked to his weak participation in the vigor of active life; he is supposed to be wise in proportion to the distance he kept between himself and daily life. He was no longer forced to retire by biological necessity, but retirement became the basis of his philosophy and clairvoyance. Thus retirement was desired, not feared. Here lies the difference with the 20th century. In the second half of the 19th century, among the middle classes engaged in business, industry, and the liberal professions, usage required at least in France that, soon after his 50th birthday, a man return to the status of living on his annuities, a status his forebears had held throughout life. Retirement was living from annuities. The lower classes, limited to physical work, did not yet have access to this privilege of age which they claimed as a right and gained only late in the 20th century.

The last generation of old people in France was those born about 1840-50 (the generation of my grandparents). Everything changed after the next generation (that of my parents) born about 1870-80. We must note in passing that this was a prodigious generation which gave birth to our modern society. They did this, not we nor our children. The men and women of that generation were born in the time of horsecarts and oil lamps, and many saw men walk on the moon before they died. Many, because they suddenly began to live when they were quite old, came especially to believe that they would age no more and that technical progress—their work—would spare them old age and permit them to retain for a long time—who knows? perhaps indefinitely—if not youth at least attractive adult maturity. Then a major event happened; unknown to previous generations: both upper and lower classes, still pursuing the conquest of retirement and the right to age, simultaneously refused age and retirement. Then the myth of age ended, and a time began of "well preserved gentlemen and ladies of middle age." "This man is amazing: he doesn't look his age. He lives like a young man." These not-old men made it a point of pride never to stop. Often an iron constitution and medical progress have kept them going to the end. They fall like lightning-struck oak trees which have never failed to turn green each spring!

Before the exclusion of the old by the young, the modern fear of old age which Fischer documents, there was an obstinate refusal of the individual to age, to relinquish his authority or cease his activity.

Philippe Ariès

Translation by Dorothy M. Betz

Philippe Ariès is the author of *Centuries of Childhood* (Knopf).
Dorothy M. Betz teaches French at Georgetown University.

The Simone Weil Reader
edited by George A. Panichas

(McKay; $15, $7.95 paper)

According to André Gide, Simone Weil was the "most spiritual writer of this century"; Albert Camus called her "the only great spirit of our time." T. S. Eliot appears to have been the first person of note to speak of her in terms of sainthood, stating moreover that she was a "woman of genius." And Weil herself in speaking of the fallen condition of humanity "here below" (her interesting expression for the phenomenal world) asserts that in our present era it is not nearly enough to be a saint, "but we must have the saintliness demanded by the present moment, a new saintliness, itself also without precedent." She has the ostensible modesty to exempt herself from this new saintliness because she felt herself to be a hopeless sinner, in a way more reprehensible than the greatest criminals, but she sets forth in explicit terms the means by which one might purify the self and approach an ultimate communion with God: a surrender of the world, a joyful acceptance of the infinite, an active embracing of the doctrine of "decreation" or disincarnation. "May God grant that I become nothing," Weil prays, in imitation of the Cathars whom she admired above all orthodox followers of Christianity. (Catharism allowed for a form of suicide by starvation, hence an ideal renunciation of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and of consciousness itself.) Weil's saintliness asserts that we must die to liberate a trapped energy, in order to return to the divine. "We must become nothing, we must go down to the vegetative level; it is then that God becomes bread."

Judiciously and reverently edited by George A. Panichas of the University of Maryland, this massive collection of Simone Weil's writings is an extraordinary book. An extraordinary experience. It is not possible to shake off the

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feeling, from the very start, that Simone Weil's admirers and Simone Weil herself are touched with a sort of playful madness: are they serious about these "ideas," are they perhaps speaking metaphorically, is the body of Weil's writings really a prose-poem not meant to be taken literally . . . ? There is no doubt that Weil was an exceptional person throughout her life. She was, at least for some years, a brilliant thinker; the long essays "Analysis of Oppression," "The *Iliad*, Poem of Might," and "Uprootedness and Nationhood" remain formidable and highly rewarding explorations of that aspect of contemporary civilization that so fascinated, in different ways, writers as dissimilar as D. H. Lawrence and Albert Camus. (Though Weil believed that the social order is essentially evil and though she was rather alarmingly pessimistic about the "diabolism" of the 20th century, there is a subtle, even pragmatic air to her thinking in these essays; and "The *Iliad*, Poem of Might," admittedly enriched by generous quotations from Homer, is a work of enduring power.) When Weil turns away from politics and the classics, however, and,stimulated by a conversion experience that seems to have begun in 1937 when she was 28, begins to write about spiritual matters, she floats off into a void of sheer vaporous rhetoric: God is love, appearance clings to being, God can only love himself, affliction is the most precious evidence of God's tenderness for man, Christ is the key, all geometry proceeds from the Cross, all men bear an animal nature within them, immorality is inseparable from literature and literature consequently should be censored—but only by "saints" or, in their place, priests of the Catholic Church who might speak for them.

Nietzsche speculated that the humble in spirit secretly wish to be exalted, and that their humility is an inversion of their own frustrated will to power. Their claim for selflessness is based upon the shaky proposition that they have underdeveloped or inferior selves, and their spiritual 'love' is really a form of resentment. ("A resentment experienced by creatures," Nietzsche says in *The Genealogy of Morals*, "who, deprived as they are of the proper outlet of action, are forced to find their compensation in an imaginary revenge.") Though Simone Weil speaks repeatedly of herself as inferior, as worthless—a pathological preoccupation that seems to have begun, according to "A Spiritual Autobiography," at the age of 14 when she was jealous of a brilliant older brother, and seriously thought of dying—it is possible to interpret her self-abasement as fueled by deep resentment and anger.

The political essays are rigorously impersonal but the essays on other subjects, particularly those on religious experience, are punctuated by the leitmotif of Weil's 'inferiority.' She speaks of herself as 'a poor unsatisfactory creature,' 'a beggar,' 'a slave,' a 'worthless object.' She hoped to be sent to prison; she hoped to become impoverished. She says that she could not imagine the possibility that any human being could feel friendship for her. . . . How surprising it is, then, for her to discover that God has for His own inscrutable purposes chosen *her* as a means by which He might express his thoughts directly, through the very pen she holds. A delicious paradox, absurdity with a true Kierkegaardian twist. "I would never dare to speak to you like this if all these thoughts were the product of my own mind," she says in a letter of May 1942; but the thoughts are not Simone Weil's, they are God's. It does not matter, Weil asserts, if the consecrated host is made of the poorest quality flour, not even if it is three parts rotten.

The phenomenon is all the more miraculous in that the vessel for God's wisdom knows herself unworthy of that very salvation she might aid others in attaining. As Weil says in a letter to a Catholic priest, her imagination, mutilated by 'overlong and uninterrupted suffering,' cannot conceive of salvation as a possibility for her. She is an outcast, a beggar, a slave. In fact, when she examines her conscience closely enough she is forced to the conclusion that she has more just cause to fear God's anger than many a great criminal. What would be a trivial sin in another person is a mortal sin in Weil. Her curious inflation of her own self-worth is never questioned, not by Weil at least, and if others attempted to point it out to her, there is no indication from her side. *She* is the object of God's attention; God is most vulnerable to *her*. In "A Spiritual Autobiography" it appears that God deliberates for some time about whether Weil should be baptized in the Catholic Church, finally coming to the conclusion, at least tentatively, that she should not. But should God change His mind

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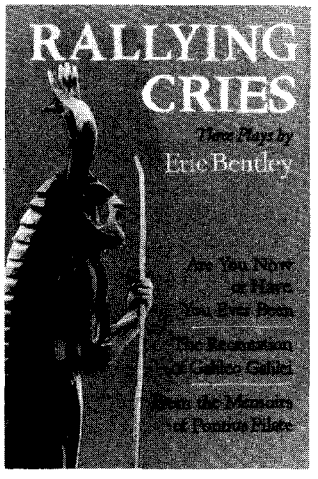
by Eric Bentley



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she would obey at once. She would, in fact, "joyfully obey the order to go to the very center of hell and to remain there eternally." (This is unlikely, however, unless God is capricious or perverse. For Weil must admit that she cannot discover any particular, serious faults in her behavior. And of course she has dedicated herself to a life of purity: the very thought of carnal appetite is repulsive.)

God's magnificent anger, however, though it might be directed toward a faultless young woman who has suffered violent headaches and other disabilities without complaint for years, is not unjust or unwelcome—not at all. "By a strange twist," Weil says, "the thought of God's anger only arouses love in me." Affliction is, after all, a marvel of "divine technique." And though it is wrong to desire it one can be permitted to love its *possibility*. For, consider, our flesh is fragile; it can be pierced or torn or crushed, or one of its internal mechanisms can be permanently deranged, by any piece of matter in motion. We are not condemned, it seems, to eternal earthly happiness. Such is God's mercy that our fragility as creatures will insure our decreation someday, and we may contemplate it with love and gratitude, stimulated by the occasion of "any suffering, whether great or small." It only seems that God is angry at us when we are afflicted or when thousands or millions of us are destroyed. In fact God loves us at such times. At such times, perhaps, more than others. Isn't our very misery proof of our special election? "*Malheur*," says Weil, "is necessary so that the human creature may un-create itself."

Like Dostoyevsky Weil seems to have twisted herself about to think that the suffering of mankind is an unqualified good, and woe to those who meddle with it. Imagine wanting to alter God's will . . . ! Isn't it a vicious sin, even, to feel sorry for sufferers? In a refugee camp in Casablanca Weil wrote that she sometimes felt moved when she saw afflicted people and that, for a certain space of time, her usual unqualified love of the merciful God was suspended; and this caused her grief because she must have offended God. "I hope he will forgive me my compassion," she says with absolute sincerity.

Yet it is doubtful that she was at heart a very compassionate person, or even a Christian in the usual sense of the word. She seems to have been charged with a self-righteous zeal that is, at times, rather chilling. In "The Responsibility of Writers" and "Morality and Literature" she blames writers of recent years for the disaster of the time—not only World War II but the "disaster" of the whole world so far as Western influence has penetrated. ("In recent years there have been some unbelievable degradations; for example, advice on love affairs by well-known writers . . . . Such easy morals in literature, such tolerance of baseness, involve our most eminent writers in responsibility for demoralizing country girls . . . .") Dadaism and surrealism are, of course, totally unacceptable: they represent the 'intoxication of license.' But less extreme writers are equally guilty in undermining the morals of the time by their emphasis upon such qualities as spontaneity, sincerity, richness, etc. and their pointed ignoring of the age-old values of good and evil. Bergson is suspect in that he values Life itself; Proust is more concerned with beauty than with the Good; all "psychological" literature is reprehensible. In the 17th century, Weil asserts with approval, there were people with the 'courage' to declare all writers immoral and to act upon their judgment.

It is not only imaginative literature, however, that is dangerous. It is the act of imagining itself. Day-dreaming. And why is daydreaming so immoral? Because it allows the afflicted person a respite from his condition and by such a way is God's will thwarted, however temporarily. Only "reality", unsoftened by the wishes of a dreaming, yearning mind, is to be tolerated.

In an essay on "Friendship" Weil states dogmatically that there can be no friendship when distance is not kept and respected. Erotic love is "unlawful" if the lovers imagine that they form a single entity; in fact, their relationship is "what might be called an adulterous union, even though it comes about between husband and wife." Elsewhere she speaks critically of carnal desires of all kinds (even hunger and thirst) because such desire is an orientation of the body toward the future, while a true detachment, an awareness of the "point of eternity" in one's soul, would be timeless. It is not surprising that this "Christian mystic" should speak with enthusiasm of the Gnostics, the Manicheans, and the Cathars, that she should speak contemptuously of the "coarseness of mind" that characterizes orthodox religion, and that she should state her preference for Plato (author of *The Republic* and *The Laws*, as well as the *Dialogues*) above all other thinkers.

Her anti-Semitism has been curiously downplayed. Perhaps contemporary morale is so impoverished that a hunger for saintliness is considered a just excuse for the suppression of certain embarrassing facts about candidates for "sainthood." But anyone who reads of Weil's life-long contempt for "the Hebrews" and for the Old Testament generally will have a difficult time defending her. The most chilling single entry in this collection is a letter of November 1940 which Weil wrote to the Ministry of Education, demanding her job as a teacher back because she did not consider herself "a Jew." (The Vichy government had passed a statute denying the rights of Jews and persons of Jewish descent.) Step by step, with a merciless logic, Weil systematically takes up the popular definitions of Judaism and declares herself outside them. She does not attack the statute; she is not concerned in the slightest with her Jewish colleagues' fate; she wants only to declare herself officially a *non-Jew*. Proudly she says: "Mine is the Christian, French, Greek tradition. The Hebraic tradition is alien to me . . . . If, nevertheless, the law insists that I consider the term, "Jew," whose meaning I don't know, as applying to me, I am inclined to submit, as I would to any law . . . . If the Statute does not apply to me, then I should like to enjoy those rights which I am given by the contract implied in my title of 'professor.'" No mention of the injustice of the statute, no mention of the plight of other Jews whose rights have been denied.

The general chronology of Weil's life is well-known. Born in Paris in 1909 to Jewish parents, she was a brilliant student and, at an early age, became actively sympathetic with Marxism, pacifism, and the trade union movement. She taught at girls' schools, not altogether successfully; she worked in a factory (but was dismissed for failing to work fast enough); she gave away most of her money; posing as a journalist, she joined the Republican Front in the Spanish Civil War (but after two months an accident disabled her, and she later wrote a letter to Georges Bernanos denouncing her former comrades for

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their cruelty and their attitude toward bloodshed: "What do I care that you are a royalist . . .? You are incomparably nearer to me than my comrades of the Aragon militias—and yet I loved them."). Disillusioned, bitter, chronically ill, she withdrew from an active involvement in the world and became increasingly religious. She studied Greek and Hindu philosophy and, in the years 1940-42, engaged in intense mystical contemplation. Displaced by the war, she went with her family to New York City where she soon became desperate to return to France to participate in the French Resistance movement. Her bad health notwithstanding, she went to London in late 1942 where, because people in German-occupied territories were starving, she so limited her intake of food that she grew ill; once hospitalized, she refused treatment and nourishment, and died in 1943 at the age of 34 of starvation and pulmonary tuberculosis. She left behind some 11 volumes of essays, letters, and notebooks on a variety of subjects including philosophy, literature, history, art, classics, politics, education, economics, and religion. The continuous posthumous publication of her works has assured her a place in 20th-century letters, but it seems to have been her mystical writings, and her self-determined death, that have made her famous.

If one examines the essays critically without reference to the life (which Panichas, following Weil's other admirers, calls a "paradigm of spiritual progress") it is difficult to see what all the excitement is about. "Factory Work" might have been illuminating for its time, but its sentiments are commonplaces now, and one wonders why Weil makes absolutely no reference to other studies of the effects of industrialization. She seems indifferent to or ignorant of Dickens, Zola, Lawrence. And one cannot help but think that her analysis of the misery of the workers' lives is superficial, for she seems to have no grasp of the fact that workers have lives beyond the factory—marriages, families, diversions. Similarly, in such essays as "Analysis of Oppression" and "Uprootedness and Nationhood," the possibility of individual happiness is never mentioned; "mankind" is glimpsed as a sort of Platonic essence despoiled by an increasingly mechanized and organized state. If "Reflections on the Right Use of School Studies" is an example of Weil's educational theory it would be merciful to pass by it in silence. (An admirer has called it "marvelous foolishness of which one believes every word," but I rather doubt that anyone else would suggest that school studies of any subject whatsoever, no matter how irrelevant or tedious, be used as a means of acquiring the virtues of humility and attentiveness necessary to a love of God.) "The *Iliad*, Poem of Might," Weil's most famous essay, makes a fairly simple point—that war is brutal, and brutalizing—and expands upon it at great length, concluding with a diatribe against the Roman and the Hebraic influence in the West.

But it is Weil's mystical essays, like "Beauty," "Contemplation of the Divine," "Last Thoughts," and particularly "Spiritual Autobiography," that are most interesting and will probably be of permanent value. They belong to that category of literature that Aldous Huxley has called the "perennial philosophy," and they do not differ substantially from the writings of all mystics. At a certain point St. John of the Cross will sound like a Buddhist saint, Eckhart will sound like the Maitrayana Upanishad, a Sufi saint will sound like St. Teresa. Weil sounds like all of them. Since her langauge consists of non-referential terms—'good and evil,' 'beauty,' 'eternity,' 'the world,' 'the divine,' 'the universe'—it cannot be criticized in any meaningful way, nor should it: such mysticism exists in and of itself.

Yet it is difficult to place Weil with the great mystics. Perhaps it is only because we know a great deal about her life, and little about theirs, and distances sanctify: still, one wonders why Weil's "visions" are taken seriously by people of intelligence. Virginal, fired from the age of 16 onward by a disgust for the flesh, Weil does not shrink from speaking of Christ in schoolgirlish terms, wondering if he loves her or not. (She thinks not, because she is so unworthy. But *perhaps* he does.) At the age of 29, according to her "Spiritual Autobiography," she was deeply impressed by the personality of a young English Catholic who introduced her to the English metaphysical poets, and whose "angelic radiance" was remarkable, and not long afterward Christ Himself came to her one day, one specific day, and "possessed" her. She speaks of the soul's virginity being taken by God and of the soul's continued "sleeping with God." One of the most embarrassing selections in the book is a sketchy hallucinatory sequence in which Christ comes to her like a lover, mysterious and abrupt. He gives her bread and wine; they stretch out on the floor together and sleep; they talk of various things, like old friends; and then Christ drives her from him, throws her out onto the street. It is revealing to learn that this dream took place in the last months of Weil's life when she was systematically starving herself to death.

Virginia Woolf once said that unless she weighed a certain weight she saw visions and heard voices. Thus with us all. Anyone who has experimented, even minimally, with meditation and fasting knows that at a certain point he will experience not only euphoria but a curious, uncanny, marvelous sense of absolute certainty. This certainty brings with it a total suspension of what might be called the skeptical powers of "ordinary" consciousness. In such a state of mind he will believe nearly anything that floats in from the outside world or from the Unconscious. Misery is joy. Death is life. Affliction is a blessing. Anything. And if, like Simone Weil, one makes it a practice to repeat, continuously, the Lord's prayer in Greek, the effects will assuredly be like Weil's—that is, "mystical."

There is no reason, of course, for us to doubt that the mystics' ideas about the

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universe are objectively true. But there is no reason for us to believe that they are true. The mystic experiences a powerful subjective reorganization of his psyche, and this experience is certainly valid. But that it has reference to an entity casually called The Universe is extremely doubtful. One reads Weil, then, with a variety of emotions. Fascination at first. Exasperation. Disappointment. Even anger at her willfulness, her refusal to recognize her own narcissism though she is quick to see it in others. One feels intermittent admiration for her honesty in setting forth the details of a highly painful and diminished life. In the end one feels a certain suspense, as in the reading of a good novel: will the heroine wake from her delusion in time to save her life?

It is Emma Bovary as saint, the narcissist as saint, brilliantly deluded. If you are humble and wish to be exalted, what better way than the way of negation, of non-attachment and mortification? Though in the beginning Weil seems to have seen with an almost Nietzschean clarity the nature of her interest in Christianity (she believed it to be a religion for slaves, and herself among them), as the years pass and her contemplative practices increase such insights fall by the way and are obscured by an ever-more hysterical and strident self-righteousness. It has been said that Weil resembles Kafka's Hunger Artist, but though the analogy is an attractive one it is finally false: Kafka's Artist dies with self-knowledge, an articulated realization of his own spiteful vanity. Weil dies with all delusions intact. She resembles Lawrence's Christ in *The Escaped Cock*, before his ressurection in the flesh, when, deathly, he sought to "love" the entire world while not being able to tolerate the touch of a single human being.

If Weil is supremely deluded, then, what of the many intelligent people who profess to admire her with such enthusiasm? The most reasonable conclusion is that they so crave saintliness (in others if not in themselves) that they will transform a sick, desperate, broken woman into a model of health; they will, despite the evidence of these essays, continue to speak of a troubled soul as if it were possessed of a wisdom superior to their own. It is all very moving, it is possibly tragic, and one might even call it "marvelous foolishness."

Joyce Carol Oates

Joyce Carol Oates's most recent book is a novel, *Childwold* (Vanguard).

William Caxton
by George D. Painter

(Putnam's; $14.95)

"This is how printing came to England five hundred years ago, and this, as far as we can know, was the life of the man who brought it." These are the simple and direct words which with George D. Painter ends his masterful biography of William Caxton. As we might expect from the man who wrote *Marcel Proust: A Biography*, this is a vivid book; one puts it down grateful to Painter and fascinated by Caxton and his times.

It was in the autum of 1476 that printing first came to England when William Caxton, a retired wool merchant and diplomat in his middle 50s, set up his press within the precincts of Westminster Abbey. Few events in English history have been more tremendous in their significance or more lasting in their consequences for our language and literature, our daily life and culture. As George Painter says, "Caxton is one of the most famous yet least known of great Englishmen." The sources for his eventful life are unexpectedly rich and varied, but have not before been adequately studied and interpreted. They range from the abundant contemporary documents in which his name and affairs are mentioned, to the hundred surviving editions of books from his press, with their texts, types, and woodcut illustrations, and the revealing and entertaining prologues and epilogues which he wrote for them. An attractive and original but distinctively English character emerges, a man of gusto, piety and humor, of business acumen and enduring political loyalties, a gifted and compulsive writer with a special delight in printing his own works, an editor-publisher of Chaucer, Gower, Lydgate and Malory who enriched English literature by translating the bestsellers of France and Burgundy, and the offstage companion, as propagandist and protege of Yorkist and Tudor royalty and nobility, of the heroes and villains of Shakespeare's *Henry VI* and *Richard III*.

William Caxton was in Cologne in 1471 when he decided to learn printing. He had just finished a massive translation into English of the latest Burgundian bestseller, Lefevre's *Recueil des histoires de Troie*. The demand for Caxton's English *Recuyell* proved greater than could be met by manuscript alone. "'And for as much as in the writing of the same my pen is worn, mine hand weary and not steadfast, mine eyes dimmed with overmuch looking on the white paper' (as he says in words that remind us of both Mallarmé and Mr. Pepys) 'and my courage not so prone and ready to labor as it hath been, and that age creepeth on me daily and feebleth all my body, and also because I have promised to diverse gentlemen and to my friends to address them as hastily as I might this said book, therefore I have practiced and learned at my great charge and dispense to ordain this said book in print after the manner and form as ye may here see.''

The new craft of western printing, then only two decades old, had been invented at Strassburg in the late 1430s and perfected at Mainz in the early 1450s by the Mainz patrician and goldsmith Johann Gutenberg. Gutenberg's invention consisted, of course, not of the mere idea of impression from inked letter-forms, which was obvious and had been long and well-known to all men, but of the technical means of doing so efficiently. The fundamental and unique new features of his discovery included an adjustable handmold, with punch-stamped matrices, for precision

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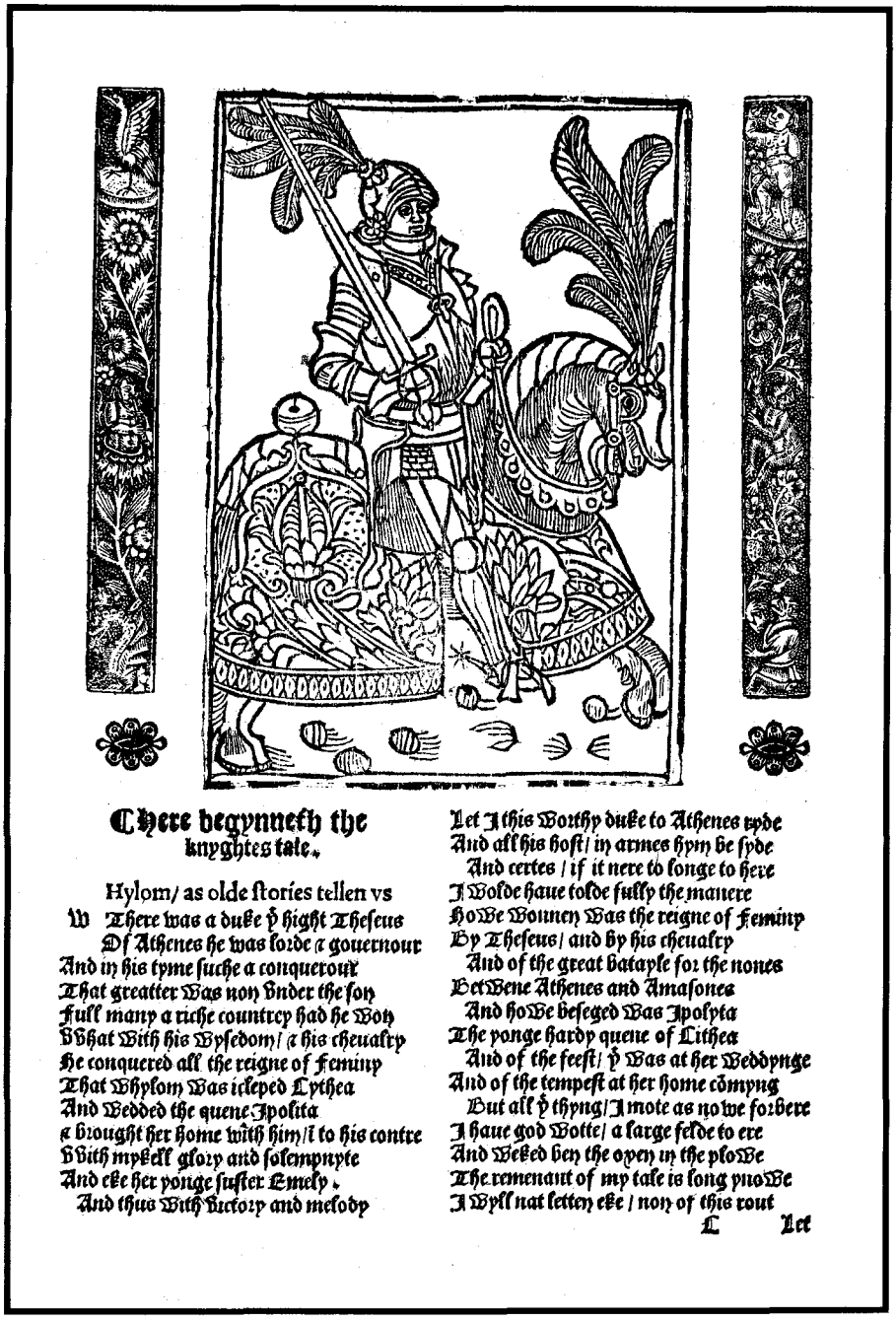

Here begynneth the knyghtes tale.

Hylom/ as olde ſtoríes tellen vs
Wthere was a duke ỳ hight Theſeus
Of Athenes he was lorde & gouernour
And in his tyme ſuche a conqueroúr
That greatter was non vnder the ſoy
Full many a riche countrey had he woy
What with his wyſedom/ & his cheualry
He conquered all the reigne of Feminy
That whylom was ycleped Lythea
And wedded the quene Ipolita
& brought her home with him/ & to his contre
With mykell glory and ſolempnyte
And eke her ponge ſuſter Emely.
And thus with victory and melody
Let I this worthy duke to Athenes ryde
And all his hoſt/ in armes hym be ſyde
And certes / if it nere to longe to here
I wolde haue tolde fully the manere
How wonnen was the reigne of Feminy
By Theſeus/ and by his cheualry
And of the great batayle for the nones
Betwene Athenes and Amaſones
And how beſeged was Ipolyta
The ponge hardy quene of Lithea
And of the feeſt/ ỳ was at her weddynge
And of the tempeſt at her home cõmyng
But all ỳ thyng/ I mote as nowe forbere
I haue god wotte/ a large feelde to ere
And weked ben the oxen in the plowe
The remenant of my tale is long ynowe
I wyll nat letten eke / non of this rout
Let

Knights Tale *Colophon: Printed at Lõdon by Thomas Godfray, 1532*

casting of type in large quantities; a type-metal alloy (lead with tin and antimony) with low melting point and quick, undistorted solidification; a hand press adapted from those used by, among others, papermarkers and bookbinders; and an oilbased printing ink. Gutenberg was an undisputed genius; his 42-line Latin Bible, produced about 1453-1455, remains probably the most beautiful and technically perfect book ever printed, and printing by hand press neither required nor received any radical improvements for three centuries after him.

Printing spread slowly during the first generation: first along the Rhine to Strassburg (1460), Cologne (1465), Basel (about 1468), then over the Alps to Subiaco (1465), Rome (1467), Venice (1469), and in 1470 to Paris. Proliferation accelerated in geometric progression as new presses were established in new towns by partners who left their companies, employees who left their masters, and pupils and apprentices who became proficient. Some masters supplied newcomers with type ready made or designed to order. Entrepreneurs in the existing manuscript trade or merchant investors often provided financial backing, markets, and managerial organization. When Caxton found himself in Cologne in 1471, printers were at work in a score of towns in Germany and Italy and the expansion of printing was about to become explosive for the next two decades.

From Cologne, Caxton went first to Bruges where the *Recuyell* was completed and published. He perfected his art and craft in Bruges, finding his first customers among the English colony of merchants and envoys in the Low Countries, and while there he also produced several books in French. All this was being done at the same time that he continued an active life in the wool business and in diplomacy. After his move to London, Caxton devoted himself solely to printing, turning out a remarkable series of translations, mostly his own, embellished with prologues, epilogues, comments, anecdotes, political allusions, and all with a constant and often successful attempt at improving the text.

Caxton's enormous edition of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (1478) took him an entire year to do. George Painter remarks that "as a first printing of a national poem in the fifteenth century this is comparable only to the first edition of the *Divina Commedia* (1472) or Villon (1489), and for the monumental magnificence of the type page combined with the ever-new impact and wonder of the text this is perhaps Caxton's finest book . . ." Later he published an extensive edition of Ovid. At the same time he did not ignore small jobs, such as handbills, indulgences, and small bits of verse. In all he printed and published over 100 works. His *Chronicles of England* was a robust account from which every Englishman learned his national history; a century after Caxton, by way of its embodiments in later chronicles such as Hall's and Holinshed's, it became Shakespeare's source for the tragedies of Lear and Cymbeline and the English historical plays up to *Henry VI*. He did books on hygiene and chess, he printed romances, dictionaries and travel books. Caxton's amusing though rather primitive woodcuts in the *Mirror of the World* (1481) are the first printed illustrations in any English book. And his great edition of *Morte d'Arthur* (1485) remained the sole source of Malory's text for four and a half centuries, until a sensational discovery in 1934 of a lost manuscript. When William Caxton died in 1491, still at his press, he was an old man who had had an illustrious career and had been honored in his own time. Now he has been honored for all time with this splendid book.

J. M. Edelstein

J. M. Edelstein is chief librarian of the National Gallery of Art.

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Brief Reviews

The Selected Poems of Irving Layton

(New Directions; $8.50, $2.25 paper)

Those who advise writers to choose concrete, precise subjects never instructed Irving Layton, for which we should be grateful; his best poems are large visions of man and men, and they are uncannily bitter. "I expect nothing from man/Save hecatombs . . . ." For Layton the world is social, not natural; even death is usually caused by men. His verse is deceptively casual, though sometimes, as in a bemused fistshaking entitled "Shakespeare" it is casual in essence and thus weak, and at other times, erring in the other direction, the rhyme takes over and unintentionally gives a poem like "An Old Nicoise Whore" the quality of a jingle.

But even the failed poems are pleasant enough, and through the successful ones speaks a poet who can be believed, his bitterness not avoiding self-mockery. Now an old man, he writes, "Spry and drugged with love/I pole-vault/over my grave." When the casual is contained by the barely perceptible rhyme and metric structure his voice joins the oldest poets.

On this remote and classic lake
Only the lapsing of the water can I hear
And the cold wind through the sumac.

The Devil's Church And Other Stories by Machado de Assis

(University of Texas Press; $10)

If a man who works as the companion of an ill-tempered invalid is provoked to strangle his employer, and then finds himself the sole heir to his employer's considerable fortune, we would expect him to be tormented, if not actually betrayed by his guilt, Poe-style. Or if one visits the woman one's friend has lost his heart to in order to plead the friend's case, and falls in love oneself (since such things are inevitable), a murder or suicide or both are similarly inevitable. But not in Machado's stories, where the murderer is never discovered; eventually his guilt dissipates—after all, the old man was very close to death—he gives some of the fortune to charity and lives uneventfully. The lover betrays his friend and quietly marries the woman; later he meets his friend, whose undying affections have painlessly transferred to another woman, and all live happily ever after. Or as happily ever after as is likely, in the Machado world where after a few years great passions "no longer burn with the same intensity" (but do not die utterly) and time allows man his hypocrisies. Where I am now is real, in the limited and self-serving vision of Machado's canary: "Everything else is illusion and deception."

Some of the exposures are crueller than these. The intentions of a worldly-but-affectionate-aunt, sympathetic listener to her niece's romantic woes, slowly evolve into a parasitic attempt to recapture the sensations of her own youth's *affaire*. But the breaking of the illusion in these brilliant tales is painful without being grotesque; and not without the bland-faced humor of all satirists: "What's eternal?" the betraying lover asks his wife in the above story. "How ungrateful you are! My love for you, of course!" she responds, and our hero dines "without remorse. Quite the contrary: I was cheerful and comforted. But that's Father Time for you! Give him a handful of mud and he'll reimburse you with gems . . ."

Prussian Nights by Alexander Solzhenitsyn

(Farrar, Straus and Giroux; $8.95)

From the first of his powerful accounts of Stalinist oppression (*One Day in the Life, Cancer Ward, The First Circle*), Solzhenitsyn's strength has been in finding the wry, human elements in inhuman situations. Without these insights we have *Gulag*, which is pure reportage but of matters which of themselves sustain the interest if not always the imagination. Not the stuff of which poetry is made, but indeed the stuff of *Prussian Nights*, a long and graceless telling of the Russian march into Germany in the winter of 1945, of the burning of German towns and the abuse of the people. The narrator is the familiar Solzhenitsyn narrator: first self-deceiving, then enlightened; and the incidents are unremarkably ugly. The verse reads as prose. It is too bad Solzhenitsyn has brought his talent for exposé to reveal the limitations of his own method.

Balletomania Then & Now by Arnold Haskell

(Knopf; $12.50)

If you can resist the illusory gratification of authoratative versions, buy a reprint of Haskell's original *Balletomania: The Story of an Obsession*, and eschew the tolerant, intelligent voice of Haskell today, which intersperses postscripts and adds a long final section to the *Balletomania* he wrote 40-odd years ago. That *Balletomania*—romantic, sometimes pig-headed—communicates the excitement characteristic of all balletomanes (Joseph Mazo begins one of his books by confessing "I have a habit of falling in love . . . with ballerinas"), a feeling finally more tangible than the sum of anecdote, philosophy, conversation which are the substance of the book.

Haskell's engagingly unsystematic tour runs through the great ballets, the dancers and choreographers: Nijinsky, Balanchine; this performance of *Les Sylphides* and that night Pavlova danced *Bacchanal* in Covent Garden. "Please don't tell me I danced *The Swan* well tonight. I know I didn't." Then as now Haskell is the true enthusiast, unself-conscious, always placing himself behind his material. Still, this edition lacks the old romantic excitement.

The Violins of Saint-Jacques by Patrick Leigh Fermor

(St. Martin's; $7.95)

The image from Renoir's *Luncheon of the Boating Party* that stays with the viewer is the table: the purple and gold grapes and the heaped greenish pears; the wine, dark red and purple in the bottoms of the scattered glasses and half empty bottles. Leigh Fermor is a master at creating these rich, gleaming scenes out of the decorations of a ball and the eruption of a volcano. The details of the costumes and the laden tables are given no less care than the fires on the island of St. Jacques, and these details are the substance in which the romance moves and takes the credibility of a fable. The vanished island has the perfection only the irretrievably lost can attain.

Roberta Tovey

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Reconsideration

Aspects of the Novel by E.M. Forster

E.M. Forster by David Schorr

To reread E.M. Forster's *Aspects of the Novel* (the 1927 Clark Lectures at Cambridge) is to remember how much we have forgotten about the relation of the novel to what it meant to be human not so long ago.

Forster's strategy of explication is straightforward: to divide the novel into sensible, now almost obsolete, categories (People, Fantasy, Plot, Prophecy) and to note how they give form to varying moral and psychological aspects of our common lot; to show how different writers discover normative and techical possibilities of the novelist.

> *And—most important—we can know more about him (a literary character) than we can know about any of our fellow creatures, because his creator and narrator are one. Were we equipped for hyperbole we might exclaim at this point, "If God could tell the story of the Universe, the Universe would become fictitious."*

The novelist can invent if he chooses a complete biological and moral history for his characters. As biography approaches metaphysics, the novel becomes naturalistic and speculative at once.

At every point, Forster demonstrates how a technical or imaginative contribution to the novel enhances or diminishes our capacity for seeing and feeling life in the round. His genius is seeing and hearing exactly how this works in specific texts. On a flat character in Scott: "It is not his idée fixe, because there is nothing in him into which the idea can be fixed." On Jamesian characters: "They remind one of the exquisite deformities who haunted Egyptian art in the reign of Akhenaton—huge heads and tiny legs, but nevertheless charming. In the following reign they disappear."

Reading and evaluating *Aspects Of The Novel* in this way becomes a test of one's responsiveness to Forster's version of liberal humanism:

> *Since the novelist is himself a human being, there is an affinity between him and his subject matter which is absent in many other forms of art.*

His love of the novel's ethos and function is based upon its ability to provide a Tolstoyan music for the broadest public. His notions, not theories, are rooted in essentialist values:

> *The hidden life that appears in external signs is hidden no longer, has entered the realm of action. And it is the function of the artists to reveal the hidden life at its source.*

These passages suggest a compatibility between everyday reality and an intellectually controlled idealism which has all vanished from our literary ambience. Forster's modest humanism becomes almost heroic when we remember the anti-human quality of so much aggressively modern *belles lettres.*

An Anglo-American tradition of moral and empirical thought could not survive intact the catastrophic war elegized by Pound:

> *hysterias, trench confessions,*
> *laughter out of dead bellies.*

And after the first war, the union of morally and esthetically shaped realism was sustained only in the voices of a humanist minority: e.g., Forster, Orwell, Lawrence. A sense of Logos and mimetic reflectiveness were shattered for this dislocated generation. A standard of democratic eloquence *was* sustained in America, to some extent, by the post-World War II New York and Chicago intellectuals, but the studied inarticulateness of the Beat Generation in the 1950s and the anti-verbal climate of the counter-culture later swept aside a recognizable human subject. Around 1960, the use of psychoanalysis, popular mythography, linguistics, and phenomonology enriched literary study, but the obsessive use of these methods soon made character insubstantial in the novel. Since the publication of a special issue of *Yale French Studies* in 1966, structuralism and post-structuralism have pushed an already Giacometti-like image of man off his pedestal.

In this light, Forster's defense of imagining man in his fullness becomes an important lesson to learn again. Forster's refusal to accept the early Modernist inversions of time, space, self and language and his commitment to story-telling as an ancient and formal response to a human need can constitute

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a critique of these recent literary excesses and pretensions.

For over a decade, favored American writers have sedulously aped advanced European literary and filmic technique—Beckett, Robbe-Grillet, Godard, and the lyrically involuted Resnais. For about 15 years, American imitators of Borges (Barth and Gass), descendants of Kafka (Barthelme and Leonard Michaels), and the heirs of information theory (Pynchon and, to a limited degree, Mailer) have "posited," rather than affirmed, the possibilities of being human.

The values of *Aspects Of The Novel* transcend, I think, mere obeisance to bourgeois humanist categories. These values put us in touch with primary human needs. To reject Forster's imagination of the human—the writer's ability to seize new forms for *obdurate* human action and consciousness within *shifting* historical contexts—is to reject the basis of narrative itself: the Paleolithic need, as Forster points out, to hear a story in community around the cave-fire, the need to have inner and outer phantoms controlled through form.

Recent trends in American writing—a somewhat augmented realism in the works of John Updike, John Cheever, Joan Didion, John Gardner, and Walker Percy—suggest a levelling off of "irrealism," "fabulation," "superfiction," and "metafiction"; suggest a demise of the trendy forms of exhaustion the novel has taken since 1960. If Vietnam presented American writers with a cultural reality too extreme for them to contain or to modulate, the sober '70s, despite (perhaps because of) its spiritual inanition has forced the American writer to go deeper. Where history fails, the heart and psyche do not. Forster knew this, as he knew the peril of self-consciousness: "perhaps it is impossible for the instrument of contemplation to contemplate itself, perhaps if it is possible it means the end of imaginative literature."

Not unlike Freud in the closing passages of *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Forster is almost elegiac at the end of *Aspects* and shares the tragic healer's sense of the possible extinction of human nature and culture. But he believes that the novelist can use his powers to resist the negation of the inner life; he believes that the delineation itself of the secret life is a moral act which can serve as a stay against the Death of Man.

Howard Wolf

Howard Wolf teaches literary journalism at the State University of New York at Buffalo, and is coauthor of *The Voice Within* (Knopf).

The Back of the Book

Industry Without Art

On May 24 at the National Academy of Sciences in Washington a panel of eminent specialists in education and the arts chaired by David Rockefeller, Jr. presented its two-year, 334 page report, "Coming to Our Senses: The Significance of the Arts for American Education" to a conference of Congressmen, artists, heads of educational associations, White House assistants, Under Secretaries, publishers, foundations officers and journalists. The program included a well-wishing letter from the Carters, a talk by Joan Mondale, clips from *The Miracle Worker*, and a showing of Mel Brooks's *The Critic*, the latter perhaps as a safeguard against unfavorable responses. The immediate response was cheers, however, at least for the theme of the report, that "the arts provide unique ways of knowing about the world and should be central to learning."

The report consists of a review of American history from the standpoint of arts deprivation; a survey of existing educational practices making uses of the arts, from elementary school through college; a section on "who shall teach the arts?"; on out-of-school arts education; and on arts in the media. Maps, cartoons, photographs and paintings are dispersed throughout, with varying degrees of appropriateness.

Central to the report are its recommendations, which Mr. Rockefeller called "the charge" in his closing remarks to the conference. Members of Congress were "urged" to establish a "National Center for the Arts in Education" which would "co-ordinate federal programs" in arts and education and "render vital services to the field," and to establish a "National Institute for the Study of Arts, Aesthetics, and Education" which would "develop and co-ordinate essential research." The Secretary of HEW was urged to appoint a "Special Advisor for the arts in education" and to "undertake saturation programs" in various school systems. Officials at NIH and NIMH were urged to do research; the Arts and Humanities Endowments, to develop and implement a "ten-year national strategy." State legislatures, state departments of education, state arts agencies, local school systems, administrators of "prisons, hospitals, and nursing homes," foundations, "major television networks," colleges and universities, and "all city mayors" were similarly urged to do their part. President Carter was urged to appoint "a National Task Force" to "assess current arts education leadership," along with a "National Citizens Council" as an advisory body to the "National Center."

Then Mr. Rockefeller saw the future: "Having issued this charge, then, to all of you, it is fair to ask what will *I* do to implement the report?" He will found (by now it is done) a new private agency called "Arts, Education and Americans, Incorporated," which will discuss the present report and "make recommendations toward the national plan." One year from now Mr. Rockefeller hopes to have held several regional conferences, and to have prepared a "second national conference" for the spring of 1978. By 1980 the "ten-year national plan" will be in full swing. "And by the end of this century? Television will not have taken the place of schools and live entertainment, but will be a creative complement to them."

If these dreams and urgings had been expressed by a hoarse anarchist in a dragging overcoat, standing on an orange crate in Union Square, they would have drawn a crowd of a dozen stragglers, which if it became obstreper-

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ous would have been run off by the police. Because the vision springs from a young Rockefeller surrounded by a panel of eminences, it not only commands an audience of worthies but money, $300,000 so far, from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Office of Education, and understandably from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and the John D. Rockefeller III Fund. That is the great advantage of choosing eminences over anarchists for presenting dreams of social reform, even though there is nothing in the recommendations specifically that could not have been thought up by one experienced administrative assistant working a long weekend for $100 per day, plus pencils.

Yet a great deal more money, including most of ours, has been squandered on a great deal worse, for longer periods of time. And to spend federal funds on high risk, long range, wide benefit projects is a good idea, too often feared by bureaucrats. Moreover, Mr. Rockefeller seems serious and able, and except for one or two of the panelists who would never know which cause they were serving at a particular time were it not for the stationery, the people around him seem sincere. The motives are clean; the ambitions large and unselfish; the end result desireable. Why, then, does the heart sink upon hearing of this venture?

For two reasons, I believe, one leaning on the other.

First, this project is conspicuously a *big* project, presenting a big report written by several big hands to other big people used to hearing big ideas and big plans. The small-is-beautiful theory has tyrannies of its own, but the big deals here are the same big ideas and plans in every such report—national conferences, regional conferences, citizens councils, task forces (a hilarious military term given the way such "forces" operate); more centers and institutes than you can shake a stick at, unfortunately. What, for example, will the "National Institute for the Study of Arts, Aesthetics and Education" do? How long is it to run? Who will attend it? What will they study? While we're at it: why an Institute in the first place? Why a National Center, a Special Assistant? Why a *10*-year plan? The descriptions of foreseen activities in the report are not explanations, and the mere presence of these catchword devices suggests how little thought has gone into them.

Second, there is the style of the presentation, which in part explains the shapelessness of the recommendations, and carries other unattractive elements of its own. These carefully selected, socially-balanced paintings and cartoons (Feiffer, *Peanuts*, John Singleton Copley); the citing in the report of the panelists who "hail from Maine to Hawaii, from Texas to Minnesota"; this calculated breadth of appeal; the stately press conference spiked with movies and stars—it all bespeaks not an idea but a method of promulgating an idea, a style which finds the method before it understands the problem, and then proceeds with all good intentions to solve the method instead of the problem. Here, once again, we have a national "charge"—to do what? By the time this effort fails, as it is almost bound to in its present form, no one will remember how it started. The professional panel-sitters will be issuing their report on the preservation of historic buildings—a report that states in no uncertain terms that historic buildings must be preserved—and a school janitor in Poughkeepsie will be wondering where to dump the play-doh.

This modern system of national commissions and reports was not invented by the Rockefeller group, nor is it their fault that most people see it as the only means by which decent, grand scale impulses may be broadcast. Until such a system works, however, it remains to be proved superior to other, less glittery systems which may not work either, but which have certain interior values, such as the effort of one brilliant, impassioned individual—not an anarchist necessarily—a John Ruskin, say, whose *Modern Painters, Seven Lamps of Architecture* and *Stones of Venice* contain all that "Coming to Our Senses" contains, and a good deal more. "Life without industry is guilt," said Ruskin; "and industry without art is brutality."

But Ruskin was working from the inside out, while this report, as it is presented if not as it was initially imagined, seems to do the opposite, to behold the customers and conceive the merchandise. If neither way ever succeeds, Ruskin's way is still the better because it is a work of art in itself, an inspiration that inspires and relies on the force of conviction rather than strategy. "Say what you please about Ruskin," William Morris declared. "The truth is, Ruskin has made art possible in this country." The same may eventually be said of the Rockefeller panel, but I would be surprised.

Roger Rosenblatt

TRB, *from page 2*

Side by side with escalating confrontation Earthlings harbored noble aspirations, and none can doubt their sincerity. A global food conference at Rome in 1974, for example, declared, "All the governments should accept the goal that within a decade no child will go to bed hungry, that no family will fear for the next day's bread, and that no human being's future and capacity will be stunted by malnutrition." Here, too, the authors warned that overkill capacity was "dangerous to human survival." But few heeded. They could flock to the theaters to watch imaginary representations of intergalactic star wars, but not discern the fantasy of their own dual existence. The Earth Engima still remains.

Meanwhile for us today, aside from fantasies, life wags along, often with ominous overtones. Has President Carter's human rights campaign got to the Soviets' back up so that detente will be lost? There seems little initial Russian flexibility at the Belgrade conference, and Moscow signals its sour mood by forcibly detaining and interrogating *Los Angeles Times* man Robert C. Toth for receiving information from a Russian scientist on, of all things, parapsychology. How do you deal with Russia? Nobody wants the arms race; under Mr. Carter's well meaning but overconfident approach the relationship has grown steadily worse. Moscow's present crack-down on dissidents may have been planned a year ago.

And, in another field, Washington uneasily awaits the visit of Israel's hardline premier, Menahem Begin. Is there room here for negotiation between the Israel immovable object and the Arab irresistable force? The United States, incidentally, has a huge trade deficit of $23 billion, only the fourth deficit in this century, and attributable primarily to imports of OPEC oil. Nobody can doubt realistically that this trade deficit is a weapon for the Arab's side. Will the price of Arab oil go up? There is talk of an increase of perhaps five percent. Like Russia's detention of correspondent Toth an increase in OPEC oil prices right now could be a signal, ever so discreet, that the Arabs have leverage in the struggle.

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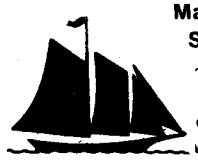

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Washington Diarist

Pictures and Words

I have a special interest in Tip O'Neill. He is my representative in Congress. Nothing he has done in that capacity prepared me for the recent celebrations of his wisdom in the media. He is nothing less, we are told by everyone and even Mary McGrory, than the teacher of the President: a shrewd politician patiently instructing a naive one. It certainly is true that their partnership got off to a bad start. But it's hardly so clear who now has got the best of whom. It's the old Lenin question still, *Kto Kovo*? *Who Whom*? The received wisdom is that the Speaker has Mr. Carter well-taught and disciplined. This was the burden of an article last week by Mary Russell in the *Washington Post*, but an incident reported in it increases my doubts. The President sent Tip a photograph of their private dinner a while back, and wrote across it, "Thanks for another political lesson." A President has the gift of flattery to bestow, and Tip has been showing the picture around the Hill. If he can't yet distinguish between a memento and an achievement, O'Neill may come to feel someday that Mr. Carter has learned his political lessons too well.

To what ends do politicians master the game or the other players? Whether Carter thinks he's mastered the Speaker, or O'Neill the President, they both lost a battle which should have been a test of whether together they could actually produce on essential elements of the 1976 Democratic promise. The President at least tried. On the morrow of his inauguration, Jimmy Carter declared a pardon for Vietnam war draft-resisters. A few months later, he initiated an upgrading process for combat veterans with less-than-honorable discharges. But in a double-barreled outburst of mean-spirited jingoism, the House voted overwhelmingly to deny funds to finance the program of pardons and to refuse veterans' benefits to those with newly upgraded discharges. It was a disgusting performance. What is O'Neill's leadership really worth if he lets the country down on this one? He and the President should twist arms to redeem the soul of the nation, rather than to salvage one porkbarrel or defeat another.

The news as of this writing is that Idi Amin is not dead. Not yet, in any case. We hope, however, that whatever difficulties he is having are not trivial. His survival notwithstanding, there has appeared this month a thriller by Leslie Watkins called *The Killing of Idi Amin* (Avon). The title alone expresses the life-wish of decent men and women everywhere that the ancient and honorable vocation of tyrannicide may soon claim this butcher for its pantheon of the wicked. But if Idi Amin still is alive, another vast death happening has befallen the Buganda tribe, his chosen victims, and those others whose lives give him the terrors of the mighty. For these people, not many will speak—let alone act—in Africa.

The Biafrans aside, no one except the *Spectator* (London) seems to have remembered that the Nigerian war began just 10 years ago this season. The squashing of the Ibos and their allies was a triumph for the imperial caprice that has charted the maps of contemporary Africa. In that preposterous cartography, an indigenous and talented people working and governing its own land would have been too exceptional to be tolerated. So it was not, and one of the few nations that might have given a good name to democratic self-government in Africa was cast again into the Nigerian rump. Against Biafran determination were arrayed Soviet and British arms, American hypocrisy, petroleum avarice, and the continent's own black leadership for whom the illegitimate rule of makeshift nation-states was the necessary norm. It still is the norm, and also the shield for the cruel racism of tribal hatreds, black against black. The struggle against the more systematic white racism of southern Africa would be better served by a class of leaders themselves more respectful of the unique destinies of individuals and the collective rights of peoples. As it is, I don't much care what the president of Guinea, or the ruling Lieutenant General in Burundi and the Major General in Somalia, or the Emperor of the Central African Empire, says about anything.

I care very much about what Andrew Young says. Because he is an old and good friend. And not because he's out of synch with the administration. On the contrary: Young's brand of open-mouth diplomacy is very much like that of the President and even of Cyrus Vance, whose apprenticeship in the foreign policy elite must have prepared him only for enunciating vacuous ambiguities. Young, on the other hand, never has been a trimmer. When we first met in the civil rights and antiwar movements, which were never especially concerned with the fine meanings of words, Young always spoke with the meticulous precision that truth requires. Genocide, for example, was not a word that easily passed his lips. Now, however, with his helter-skelter references to British racism—and to that of the Swedes and Gerald Ford and the Borough of Queens—he has sapped the concept and the practice of its criminal integrity. Racism is too important an idea to be frittered away on those who simply are not adequately sensitive to the plight of black people. There are real culprits, and the suppression of racial and ethnic minorities should not be confused with the lesser sin of prejudice.

The loose-lip vernacular of politics has had the dire consequences which George Orwell predicted: in several English universities, the National Union of Students is denying its platforms to Zionist speakers on the spurious ground which carried the General Assembly—itself composed of many racist states all of whom joined the debauch—to declare that Zionism is racism. What troubles me is that much of Andy Young's talk of racism abroad seems a projection of his frustrations at the immobility of this administration on the problems of race and poverty at home.

There is no refuge from the President, not even in the *Times Book Review*. In an interview conducted by the review's editor, Jimmy Carter told us about the Georgia legislative study group on Dylan Thomas, his fondness for Faulkner ("he has most accurately analyzed . . . the fallibility of human beings and the basic weakness of mankind, and has encapsulated those struggles between good and evil, pride and humility. . . ."), and his wife's preference for Carson McCullers and that he was broken up when Reinhold Niebuhr died. Buried in the characteristic hyperbole of one sentence, there is a kernel of a good idea: "It's obvious that in our society the most significant action that can be taken is the evocation of a concept or an idea by words." Yes, it's true: words have meanings and consequences. That's why they should be used carefully, more so than Jimmy Carter and his friends do.

M.P.

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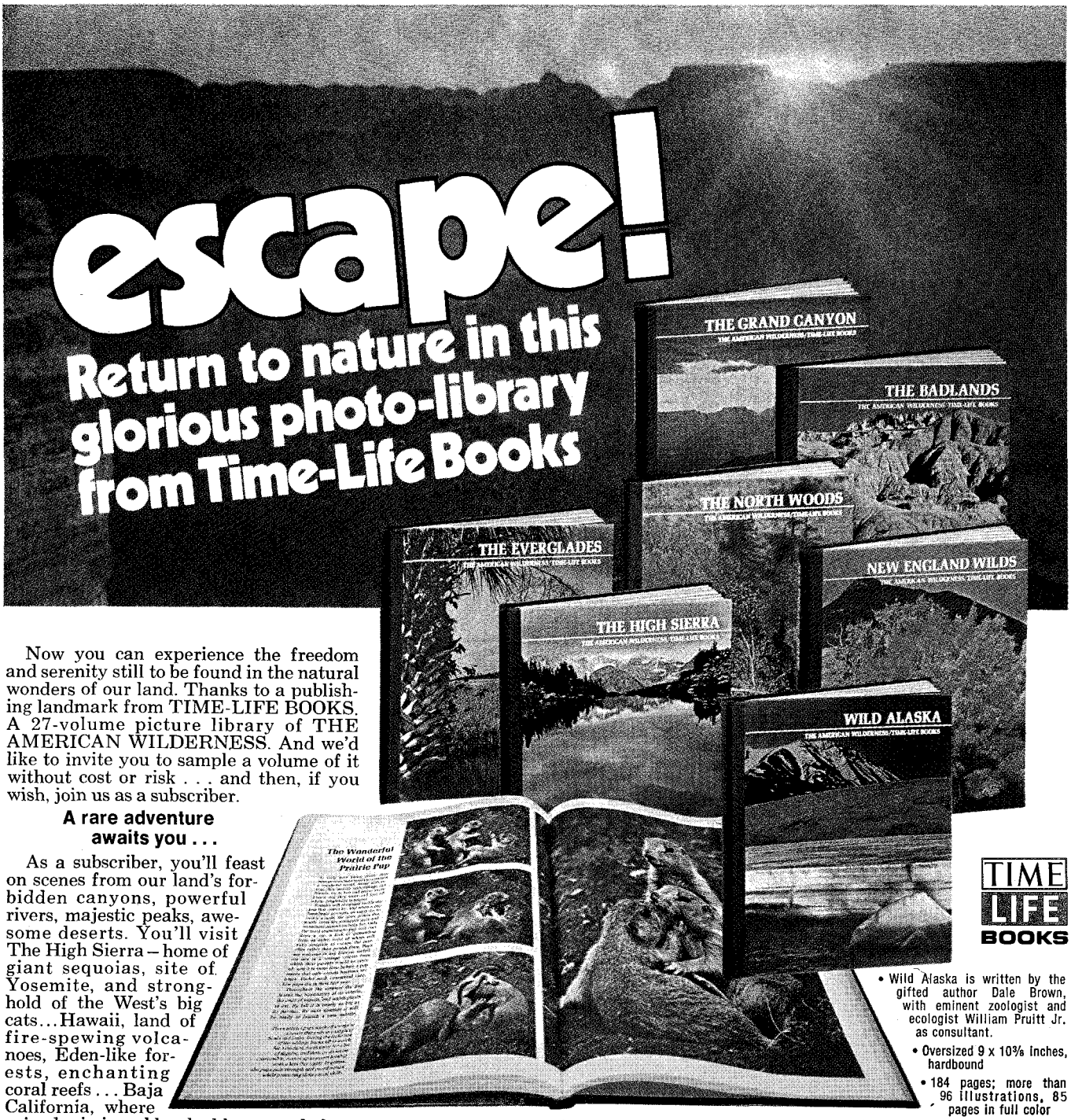

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